Sunday Stories

by

Rev. H. N. Brown.

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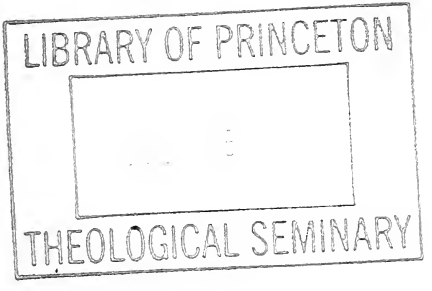
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SUNDAY STORIES.

BY

REV. HOWARD N. BROWN.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

The following pages are taken from discourses of the Rev. HOWARD N. BROWN, of Brookline, to the children of his parish, in Sunday School; and are now published, with his leave, by some of his parishioners, who desire to extend to a larger circle, the pleasure and the benefit they have derived from them.

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SUNDAY STORIES.

I.

THE STAR IN THE EAST.

We have seen his star in the east.— *Matthew*, ii. 2.

WHEN JESUS was born in Bethlehem, says the Gospel narrative, wise men came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east." And afterwards, continues the story, the star went before them and guided them to the place where the child Jesus was.

In those days there were many beliefs about the stars which we do not hold now. If one of them shone with more brilliancy than usual, as they sometimes do, people thought it a sign that something unusual was to happen on the earth.

It is not surprising that at a time when all the Jewish nation was looking for the Christ to come, these wise men should take the star to mean that he had come; nor is it strange that the star should seem to lead them to the spot where Jesus was born.

Some of you may have travelled far enough under the stars to have noticed how they seem to go before you. Just over the brow of the next hill, as you ride, will hang a bright, trembling, little eye of light, and it seems that before long you will be directly under it. But when you have climbed the summit of that hill, there is the star, winking merrily away just over the brow of the next. And so as on you go, down into the valleys, and up over the hills, always the star seems just before you ; and always it seems to go backward as you advance.

Is it not a pretty picture, these wise men of the East in their priestly robes, mounting over the hill-sides of Judea, in the full splendor of a cloudless night, their eyes fixed upon the great burning star, which shone down upon them with a solemn, holy light? How their hearts must have swelled at thought of the noble man and the great things which that star portended, and how very eagerly they must have followed its rays, until they came to Bethlehem, and to the infant Christ!

For each one of us, my dear children, there is a star in the heaven, which points us the way toward Christ and God, and it is about this star that I am going to tell you.

We see it always in our childhood. Happy for us if our eyes do not wander from it to some earthly light; if clouds do not hide it from our gaze, or if we

find not the road too rough to follow its lead. It is the star of goodness and truth, and it shines down upon us, and touches our faces as they are turned up toward it, with the light of faith.

Let me tell you what this star does for us. Out upon the wide ocean, far away from land, where the wind brings no scent of flowers, but only the cold breath of the white-capped waves; where is neither song of birds nor hum of bees, but only the monotonous, unending murmur of the waters; where the sun in his setting tips no hills with his glory, but seems to put out his light as he dips himself into the billows, and the stars seem like white bits of foam that have blown up from the surface of the sea and stuck themselves upon the sky, rides a ship, rising and falling with the heave of the waves, while her white sails silently and gently stretching out with the breeze, urge her silently onward.

It is fine weather, and a merry party are on deck. One by one the stars are coming out against the darkening background of the sky, and low down in the west, toward which they are sailing, the evening star shines like a beacon light. The passengers are thinking of home, for they are almost there; and that star hangs directly over the loved ones who await their return. Perhaps they too are watching it, over the fading glow of sunset, and wondering how many times it must look down upon them

before it sees the wanderers safe home again. Thus, as the voyagers rise and fall with the heave of the sea, the star beckons them to haven, and home, and loved ones; and it seems that they will never weary of gazing at its radiant beauty. But at length the night grows chill, and they go below to sleep, while still the ship rises and falls with the heave of the sea, and the star, lower down in the west, peeps over her bow, and silvers her white deck.

All at once, in the dead of night, the passengers are awakened. There is a sound of swift and heavy trampling over their heads, as the sailors run hither and thither, dragging at the heavy ropes. The vessel madly plunges and rears like a frightened horse. The waves with angry blows beat upon her sides, and send a quiver, as of pain, through all her timbers. The wind roars even louder than the sea, and the hissing rain descends in torrents. Still the ship tosses the foam from her bows, as though it obstructed her sight, and rushes swiftly on. The passengers are not allowed to go on deck, and through many weary hours they can only listen and wait. The trampling above continues, and now and then a loud crash tells that the spars are giving away, or a sail has blown out of the bolt-ropes. The creaking grows louder as the ship rolls from side to side, and she seems to be losing her life; growing exhausted, as it were, in the long struggle. She rises

less buoyantly upon the waves, but with sullen determination plows through them. The water is pouring into her from many an opened seam, and the vessel is slowly sinking.

All through the night, and far into the afternoon of the succeeding day, the passengers sit in the cabin, without being able to do more for their safety than hope and pray. Then the storm is surely going down, and they begin to think that the danger is past, when suddenly the hatches are opened, and a hoarse voice shouts down the order to take to the boats. Up they rush, and no time is to be lost. The boats are already stored with provisions, and they take their places. When all is ready, the captain descends to his cabin for his instruments. But just as he has almost reached the boat with them, a great wave sweeps him off his feet, and he is forced to cling with both hands to a rope. When he regains his feet, the instruments are gone. There is not a moment to spare. He springs to his place; the boat is cleared away, and the noble ship with a plunge goes down into the deep.

Where are they now? They have been driven far out of their course, and have lost their reckoning. They have no instruments with which to determine their position, or tell them what way they should sail. But as the sun goes down, the clouds clear away, and struggling out of the west, growing brighter

and brighter as the day departs, appears the evening star.

How different is their situation from that in which they last beheld it! Yet still it beckons them to haven, and home, and loved ones; and rising and falling with the heave of the sea, they once more turn their faces towards it, while the star shines on to guide them across the watery way. Day succeeds day of exposure and danger. But still, night after night, the star comes out to inspire them with its calm and steady light. Always, as darkness falls, they turn their eyes towards the West, and wait in breathless silence, till some one cries out, "I see the star!" Then if they have left their course, they once more turn their prow straight towards it, and as again and again it appears before them, they know they must be nearing loved ones and homes. They see great sails upon the horizon, but too far away to notice their little boat, and so rising and falling, they patiently sail on.

At length, one evening, soon after the sun is out of sight, a great light bursts out just above the line of the sea, and a chorus of voices cries out, "I see the star!" But a great joy shines in the captain's face, as he says, "No, it is not the star." And sure enough, the star itself soon appears, and hangs just over this other brilliant flame. Then they know that they see the harbor light, and a great shout of deliverance goes up to heaven.

Thus in all their wanderings, the star has gone before them, and has guided them surely to haven, and loved ones, and home.

So, dear children, our souls are out upon the ocean of life. In our hours of happiness and mirth, when the swelling tide of youth fills us only with joy and delight; while the gently heaving current hides all its angry waves in a smile of security and peace, and we build happy dreams of what shall come to pass; the star of faith in God, of trust in goodness and truth, shines in upon our hearts, with a light which kindles all our hopes, and leads us towards that future in which all our dreams are to be realized.

And if the hour of tempest and danger comes to drive us from our course; if the winds of temptation blow, or the waves of sorrow rise; if shipwreck befall us and we are forced to exchange the ship of our pride, for a life of danger and toil, exposed to rude buffeting; always this star shines out, to guide our course and tell us of a home of happiness and peace which awaits our coming. In all the scenes of our life, whether we look and long for it, or forget that it is there, the star shines ever the same, to make our joy more joyous, to make our sorrow easier to bear, and show us the way in which we shall find the safe end of all our wanderings.

Let me tell you a short fable, to illustrate still

further what I mean. There was once a soft-eyed, snowy-plumaged dove, that fell in love with a beautiful star. She had never seen the star many times, this dove, she went to sleep so early. But one evening she was awakened in great fright by the angry hooting of an owl, whose fiery eyes stared at her through the window of her little house, till, finding that he could not reach her, he flew away. Then because she could not sleep, she looked up through her window, to one very bright star. Perhaps it was the contrast between its mild beauty and the brutal stare of the owl; perhaps it was because its purity was so like the innocence of her own heart; but for some reason, the longer she gazed the more fascinated did she become, and the less she felt like going to sleep again.

Then she began to feel discontented with things about her, and she cried out, "Oh, star! why can I not fly away to you, and be among all the bright eyes of night, far above this world where I see so much that is cruel and bad, and where I have so many foes?" But the star did not answer her, though she crept out of her nest into the still evening air to listen. Again and again she cried out, till the longing of her soul grew so strong that she forgot every thing else, and spread her white wings for flight. Up and away she soared, for many and many an hour, beating her wings in the thin air of the heavens,

through which she could not mount. But the star was still as far away as ever, and at length, utterly exhausted, she fluttered back to earth again, murmuring, "Not yet; I am not strong enough yet. By-and-by I shall be stronger, or perhaps he will come nearer to me." So she crept back to her nest, and cooed to the star, long and lovingly. To be sure he did not answer her; "but," thought she, "he must love me, else he would not shine upon me so sweetly and constantly."

Thus the little dove was perfectly content, and bided the time when it should be made right for her to fly away to the brilliant sky. "It will come," she said, "and meanwhile I have the beautiful light of my star to comfort me." Night after night she watched for his rising, nor would she close her eyes till she had poured out to him her evening song of love, and his holy peace had shone into her soul.

She was no longer afraid of the terrors of the night, for was not his eye always open and watching her? So, although birds and beasts of prey were abroad, she slept without fear, under the guardianship of her star. She was a little troubled when the clouds first hid him from her eyes, and thought, "What if he has gone away and no longer loves me?" But the next night he was in his accustomed place, and she soon learned never to doubt him, when the storm and the cloud came. She said, "He

is there, and he knows that I am here, though I cannot see him."

Through many bright summers and many weary winters, the dove loved and waited and hoped on. She did not mope or pine, but had many pleasures dear to her heart. Still the chief of all, was to watch the star and dream of the time when she should fly away to him.

One clear and sunny morning, when all the earth was decked in flowers, and every thing in nature was radiant with happiness, the dove set off for a ramble. The perfection of the day tempted her on and on, and its heat made her seek the upland breezes, till late in the afternoon she awoke as from a dream, to find herself high up among mountains. The sun was going down, and an angry storm rising, whose winds were even then shaking the tops of the pines. She was full of terror, but still her first thought was that the star would be disappointed if he should not find her in her nest. She hastily took her direction and found that her home was directly in the face of the coming storm. Swiftly she flew that she might find shelter before it reached her. But it met her, before her long journey was well begun.

Bravely she battled with its rage, but she could make no headway against it. The torrents drenched her plumage, and the stormy gusts swept her backward and still backward, among the mountain peaks.

She gained a moment's rest, by perching upon a rock during a short lull of the wind, but it soon swept her again with its tumult. She could not rise above it, nor make headway through it. She could find no cover from its awful power, and she dared not fly before it lest she should blindly dash herself upon some rock in the darkness. She was caught as by the hand of a giant, and though she struggled long and well, the giant tossed her at length high up upon a ledge, bruised and bleeding — her strength gone, her snowy wings broken and torn, and her life slowly ebbing out through the wounds made by the ugly rocks.

"Oh!" moaned the poor dove, "does the star know where I am? Why does he suffer me to be so tossed and torn by the cruel winds?" Just then the clouds parted, for the storm had gone by, and lo! from out the clear blue sky, the star looked kindly down upon her. She caught his glance, and all her pain was at once forgotten. Her soul went out to him with as much love as though she was sitting once more in her cozy dove-cote. All dying as she was, she felt that at length she was strong enough to make her way into the heavens. And though her head slowly sank upon her blood-stained bosom, she feebly fluttered her shattered wings, and murmuring, "At last the time has come," she died.

But who shall say that her pure spirit had not

found strength to fly away to the home of her dreams?

Does not the fable carry its own moral to your minds? Are not all our souls like the dove, in love with a star — the star of God's goodness, which shines down upon us from so far away — yet whose beams come so close to our hearts? Suppose God does not speak when we cry out to Him, is it not enough that He still shines upon us, and answers our love by never withdrawing His light? And though we find ourselves chained to the world amidst its angry and brutal passion, still we can bide the time when strength shall be given us to mount into the heavens. For each one of us the star is shining; let us follow it, and love it, and let us believe with the dove, *even until death*, that our souls shall at length find it and be at rest.

II.

TENDER-HEARTEDNESS.

And be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.—*Eph.*, *iv.* 32.

IN trying to tell you what it is to be "tender-hearted," I think I must first ask you to be very careful not to think of it as being "chicken-hearted," that is, cowardly. I suppose there are few things which boys especially despise more than cowardice, but they sometimes do not call things by their right names.

I agree with the boys that a coward is contemptible, but I am not sure that we should always agree who is the coward. Now so far are tender-hearted people from being cowardly, that they are usually among the bravest of the brave, because they are easily moved by the danger or trouble of another, and forget all about the risk to themselves, in trying to right the wrongs, or relieve the perils of others.

Suppose, for example, that a pleasure-boat should capsize near the shore, and, in full view of men standing there, its occupants should be on the point of drowning. One man might say, "I run great risk of drowning, myself, if I attempt to swim to their rescue. Even if I reach them, I have heard that

drowning people sometimes clutch one about the body, and cannot be made to let go. My life is worth as much as theirs, and so they may go to the bottom for all me."

This man would be both hard-hearted and a coward; hard-hearted because he would have so little pity for those struggling desperately to save their lives; a coward because he would be afraid to risk anything to rescue them. Another man would feel as quickly and as keenly the danger of others as though he himself were in peril of his life; and without stopping to calculate the chances, would rush at once to their assistance. This would be the brave and tender-hearted man; brave because he had a tender heart, which the sight of misfortune would easily move.

Or, suppose you should some day find a group of boys upon the play-ground, gathered about one large boy abusing a small one, who was getting very badly kicked and cuffed, without strength to defend himself. And suppose there should be other large boys in the crowd, who looked on with indifference, and would do nothing to help the weaker. Should you not say they were both cowardly and hard-hearted? And if there was a boy there who really pitied the little fellow, and felt indignant with the bully, would he not step forward and say, "Do you let this boy go, or you'll have me to deal with"?

So I do not want you to think that "tender-hearted" means "chicken-hearted," but something quite the opposite. For when is a thing hard or soft? Plainly enough it is hard when you cannot easily make any impression upon it. You accidentally run your head against a door in the dark. It doesn't hurt the door; you will find no bruise upon its panels, and there will be no need to apply brown paper to keep it from swelling. But your head, ah, that is another matter! The door makes a good deal of an impression upon that. The door is hard, because when other things strike it, it makes little difference with the door. That stands a good many hard knocks, before it is seriously injured. But your head is tender or soft in comparison, because a very little bump will set the stars dancing before your eyes, and puff out a great swelling on your forehead, while a good solid knock, such as you get sometimes in skating, will render you for a time insensible.

This, then, is what I want to make you see, that hard-hearted people, are such as are not easily affected by what they hear or see, or by what takes place about them. Sound, you know, is made by little waves of air, which beat upon the ear, like drum-sticks on the head of a drum. Now when these little waves of sound make no impression upon a man's ear, we say he is hard of hearing, that is, he is deaf. So little waves of joy and sorrow are always made

by the lives of those about us, and are continually beating against our hearts. If they make no impression upon us; if our hearts only send them back again as the side of a wall sends back your ball, then we are hard-hearted, unfeeling, cold and without sympathy. If these waves of joy and sorrow sent out by others, enter into our minds and make us joyful or sorrowful with those about us, then we are tender-hearted, full of pity, and ready to forgive, even as Christ forgave all his enemies.

Let me try to illustrate for you how much this quality of tenderness or sympathy means in our lives, and how much it has to do with our happiness. The different articles of furniture in a parlor, once fell into conversation among themselves while the family were at dinner, and as some of them were rather vain, they began to boast of their respective powers to enjoy life and give pleasure to others. At first the talk was mostly between a large pillow lying upon the sofa, and a marble statue standing on a pedestal in the corner. The pillow was very proud of a bright silk patchwork covering, which indeed looked very beautiful as the firelight shone upon it. It was forever boasting of its bright hues, saying that it could first attract the notice of every one who entered the room, and was more admired than ever that priggish statue had been, say what it would.

The statue replied with a little sniff of disdain,

that it hadn't much opinion of a stuffy, dumpy thing with nothing but feathers inside it; which couldn't stand alone if it tried; whose shape was destroyed, every time any one happened to touch it, and which had to be shaken up a dozen times a day to keep it in any decent figure. "Now as for me," continued the statue, "people may rub and thump and lean upon me, I always preserve my own form. I am solid and strong; my beauty is the same, day in and day out. Nothing disturbs me or annoys me, and I am always a source of delight to those who look at me. But as for you, (turning to the pillow,) although you are sometimes rather pretty, yet half the time you have no more shape than a lump of mud."

The pillow now shook itself up in its anger, and its silk covering fairly rustled with indignation, as it replied: "Solid! I should think so — If I were as rigid as you, I should hate myself. Always standing on that one toe, (I should think it must ache dreadfully by this time;) always staring down at that one flower, with that same smile; and a precious silly one it is! I wish to goodness you *could* double up when some one poked you in the side; or take your arm down; or stand on the other leg, or do something to change your position. I am sure it would be a relief to all of us, for we are terribly bored at having so cold and stiff a thing always in sight."

Hereupon the chairs and the sofas all chimed in

with their assent; while the clock and vases on the mantle-piece, together with the pictures on the walls, began all to talk together in defence of the statue. They grew very noisy and excited, and called each other hard names. Even the books on the shelves began to quarrel among themselves, as some were bound in stiff hard boards, and felt themselves aggrieved by what the pillow had said, while others, bound only in paper, considered that the remarks made by the statue reflected upon them.

So there was great pushing and crowding upon the shelves, till half a dozen large volumes were elbowed out of their places, and fell with a great crash to the floor. At this the piano shuddered, and gave a little moan of pain; the first sign it had given that it took any notice of what was going forward.

Of course the fall of the books made a little silent pause, as all stopped to see what had happened; and so it chanced that all heard this little painful moan given out by the piano. At once they all turned fiercely upon it. Oh! the dear delicate creature. Such a great overgrown thing, and yet so very sensitive! How nice it must be to have such refined nerves. Doubtless it felt shocked at the noise they were making. But if it didn't like it, it had better make some use of those elegant carved legs, and march out of the room.

So angry did they grow, that when the fire-screen

proposed that they should rise in a body and put out of the room a thing so aristocratic and one which felt itself so much above them, there was a great tumult and shout of applause, and the chairs and ottomans tumbled over each other in their haste to get at the piano.

But all this time a pair of brass tongs, with a very solemn cast of features, had been leaning against the fire-place and gazing quietly into the fire. Now the tongs had won a great deal of respect and some reputation as a philosopher, because it never lost its temper, and when it got into an argument, was seen to get the best of it. So now when it raised itself erect and gave two or three loud snaps with its feet, all knew what it meant. As when a meeting gets noisy, and the president with his little wooden mallet calls it to order, so the sharp click of the tongs reduced the whole room to silence.

"One moment," said the tongs, "before you turn the piano out of doors. This dispute was at first as to who could give and receive the most happiness. Suppose we settle that first. You are angered with the piano because it is so sensitive; perhaps that may turn out to be a virtue rather than a weakness. Now," continued the tongs, "I shall go about the room and give you each a good hard kick. That will settle one thing, and that is, who is most likely to be made unhappy by what others do to it."

So saying the tongs made a stride forward, swung back its long leg and delivered a vigorous kick at the centre of the pillow. "Did it hurt?" asked the tongs. "Not a bit," replied the pillow. So all the rest thought that to be as good as the pillow they must say it didn't hurt. The chairs did ache a little when their legs got two or three hard raps, but they said, like the pillow, that it didn't hurt.

But when it came the turn of the piano, that could not keep still. The very first blow set all its wires jingling, and at the second it fairly screamed with pain. Thereupon all the rest thought that its weakness was very clearly shown.

"Hold," said the tongs, "I have yet one other test." So mounting upon a table where stood a large music-box, already wound up, the tongs touched the spring which set it in motion, and off it went, playing a beautiful air from an opera. "Oh, stop that noise!" cried all the chairs and sofas and tables in a breath. "What is the good of setting that rattling thing a-going. If you don't stop it, it will keep up its horrid tinkling for an hour, and none of us will be able to hear ourselves think."

"Silence all of you!" shouted the tongs, "and listen." So all kept perfectly quiet for a few moments, while the music-box played on, and then from the other end of the room, where the piano stood, arose a little faint murmur of harmony in response.

All could hear it, and the chairs which stood near declared that the piano was fairly trembling with pleasure.

"So, my friends," said the tongs, "the piano is not only hurt by what does not trouble you, it takes the keenest delight in what you cannot appreciate. But I hear footsteps coming this way. Whoever it may be, do your best to attract attention, and whichever of you succeeds best, let us say that is the one which has most power to give happiness to others."

Just then a young girl appeared at the door and paused upon the threshold to listen to the music. The sofa-pillow coughed in its half-smothered voice, as loud as it could, and shook its bright colors in the firelight. The statue hummed and hawed, the chairs shuffled their feet, and the lighter ones tried a little dance. The pictures waved to and fro on the wall, and the marble clock began to pound away furiously on its silver bell.

But none of these extraordinary things did the child notice. So absorbed was she in the music that she did not even see the tongs, though that article of furniture was curiously enough standing bolt upright in the centre of the room and watching her very earnestly. A moment she stood listening. Then catching the air played by the music-box, she ran to the piano and began playing an accompaniment. The tongs looked slowly about at the crest-fallen

furniture, stalked solemnly back to the fire-place and resumed its contemplation of the fire. The little girl played on long after the music-box had run down, while the pillow, the statue and all the rest of them relapsed into silent thought.

And this is the lesson I hope they had learned,—that sensitive natures, which are easily pained by any wrong-doing, find most in life to delight them and are most capable of giving happiness to others.

There are soft-hearted people, we will say, like the pillow, who are impressed by every thing that troubles them, and have hardly any thoughts or feelings of their own. Then there are hard-hearted people like the statue, on whom nothing can make any impression. But there are also tender-hearted people whose natures, like the piano, are responsive to the joys and sorrows of those about them, and these, if they are sometimes most grieved, are at other times the happiest people that live.

Will you put away in your memories the truth, my dear children, that to be tender-hearted means to give and to receive much happiness? This is the first lesson I want to teach you. The second is, that it is our duty to be tender-hearted. How shall I make you see this too? Listen to another short story.

There was once a very good and great king, who ruled over a brave and kind people, upon whom a neighboring king made war. This other king, who

began to fight, had no complaint to make against the king or the people whom he set out to conquer, but he had heard that they were very rich, and he determined to rob them. So he sent his son at the head of a large army, to enter the good king's land and to capture his cities. The young man was handsome and a great soldier, but he had been brought up among rough men and was very cruel in his disposition. So when the armies of the two kings came together, they fought a great battle, and the army of the bad king was beaten and put to flight. Then word was brought to the good king, that his enemy's son, who had invaded the country and caused so much bloodshed, was taken prisoner, and very dangerously wounded. He gave orders that the young man should be brought before him, and when he was brought in on a litter, all saw that he was in great pain and very weak from loss of blood. When the king asked his nobles what ought to be done with him, all said that he should be put to death, for he was a bad man who would give them trouble as long as he lived. But the king looked into his handsome face and said, "No! I ought rather to save him; I am sure there is much good in him, and perhaps the poor fellow never has known what kindness is."

So he not only spared his life, but gave him money and attendants, and physicians, and ordered his own daughter to see that their guest had every comfort

and attention. But all the while during his recovery the Prince was meditating how to take revenge for his defeat and the loss of his army. He rode all about the city to find the weak places in its fortifications; he bribed the servants of the king to carry secret messages to his father's court; and had arranged a plan by which some of his own soldiers were to enter the country in disguise, be admitted to the city, and take the king prisoner. Then they were to ride away with him, before any one knew what was done, and get a very large sum of money, called a ransom, for setting him at liberty.

But the king had faithful servants, who told him what the Prince was doing, and once more in the presence of his nobles he called the young man before him. Again the nobles said that he ought to die. But again the king looked into his face and said: "No, he is smarting under the sense of defeat. He has lost and suffered much, and thinks I do not mean him any good. He must understand that he will be closely watched, but he is free to go or stay; and if he chooses to go back to his own country, he shall have money and horses and servants, according to his condition."

So the Prince began to make arrangements for departure. But the king said to his daughter, "Cannot we touch his heart with pity, so that he will cease brooding over the failure of his own plans, and learn to live for others?"

The Princess found a poor beggar woman, whom she told to sit at the gate when the Prince dismounted from his ride, and ask him for alms. But the Prince swore at her a great oath, and would give her nothing. The next day she was there again, and he struck her across the face with his riding-whip. Then the Princess said, "I myself will try if I cannot touch his hard heart." So she put on a mean dress, and rode away to the edge of the forest, where dwelt an old woodman and his wife, whom she knew, and by whose hut the Prince often rode. There the Princess took up her abode; and the next day, as the Prince rode that way, he saw a young girl knitting under the tree, with a jug of milk standing at her side. Being thirsty, he reined in his horse and asked her for a draught of milk. Then, seeing that she was very beautiful, he said, "It is a great pity that so fair a face should not find its owner a fairer fortune." "Ah, my lord!" said she, "my handsome face is no treasure to me, for it exposes me to the insult of every rude passer-by. Only last even there came one to the hut, who swore he would have me for his wife; and when I refused, he said he would come with a troop of horsemen and take me away." "Tell me where I may find him," said the Prince;" "I will chastise him as he deserves;" for something like pity for the defenceless stirred for the first time in his heart. "Alas! but the poor man with whom I

live owes him money, and if any harm should come upon him through me, he would wreak his vengeance upon this weak old man."

All this was true which the Princess had said, and the Prince was much interested in the story. So he rode back to the palace and found the king, and said, "Sire, on the borders of the forest live a worthy couple, whose distress I would fain have you relieve." The king was delighted, for he perceived that at length his heart was touched. "Name any sum you like," said he, "and be yourself the bearer of it to those who are in need."

So the next day the Prince went again to the cottage, and carried money enough to pay the old man's debt. And while he was chatting with the Princess, the creditor came.

He was so rough and rude to them all, that the Prince beat him soundly with his riding-whip and sent him away, promising to serve him worse if he ever appeared there again. "Ah!" said the Princess, "would you think it? When this cruel man was a boy my godfather found him one night perishing in the cold. He saved his life; for my godfather is a tender-hearted man, who could not bear to see even a mouse suffer pain. But, though he was ever very kind to this boy, yet he grew up cruel and unfeeling, and now often strikes the very hand that saved his life." Then the Prince was cut to the heart, for he

saw how he had wronged the good king who saved his life.

Hastening before him, he threw himself at his feet and confessed, "Sire, I have been a very wicked man; I have thought nothing of the good of others, but only of my own pleasure. To your kindness I owe my life; and how have I returned it? I am not fit to govern a kingdom. Grant, then, that I may marry a poor girl whom I have found in the forest, and henceforth live in obscurity among the poor and distressed of your realm, to do what good I can."

"Now, indeed," replied the king, "you appear most fit to govern a kingdom, since you have shown that you can feel for the sorrows of others. Know that the poor girl, whom you have learned to love, is Princess of this realm, and loves you. Hold you only to this new spirit that I see in you, and you shall rule with the Princess as her husband when I am gone."

So the Prince thenceforward kept trying evermore to have a more tender heart toward all men; to be made glad by their joy, and to sympathize in their misfortunes. And in after years he was called the greatest and best king in all the world.

My children, we all serve a great King, whose goodness to us we cannot begin to estimate. He has made and given to us all this fair earth, and fixed wise laws for our government. And though we many

times break these laws, He does not get angry with us, but only loves and pities us without end. Is it not our duty to be tender-hearted toward those about us, even as God is always ready to forgive our trespasses? I am sure you will each of you see that it is your duty, as the Prince found it was his, to try to enter into the thoughts and feelings of others; not only to refrain from doing them wrong, but to feel so sorry for their griefs as to want to do them good, whatever they may do to you.

Be ye kind and tender-hearted one toward another, because only so do we give or receive happiness, and because that is what God expects of us as our duty.

III.

TRUTH.

THERE was a little girl, the daughter of a farmer living away off among the hills, who was very bright and active, and in many ways useful to her parents. She could drive the cattle to pasture, work in the field raking hay, help her mother wash the pans and the pails, and sometimes assisted in making the butter. What she did, she did so quickly and skilfully, that she was quite the wonder of the neighborhood.

But she did not speak the truth. There were days when she seemed to be possessed of some evil spirit, and when from morning till night she delighted in telling falsehoods. At other times she would speak the truth or not, just as it happened.

Her mother was a kind and gentle woman, who had tried always to make her daughter see the sin of telling falsehoods, and to persuade her to love the truth. She had always hoped that as Christie grew older, she would change in this respect and become more like other children. But now she was getting so old that her mother began to lose this hope, and reluctantly resolved to try what punishment would do. So Christie was told that the very next wrong

story would cost her a whipping. For answer, she went out of doors and came in again, saying that the pigs had broken out of their pens and were spoiling the flower-garden. Her mother ran out in great haste, but not a pig was to be seen. It was another of Christie's fibs. When asked why she told it, she only answered, "For fun!" So she was punished, and as it did not seem to make the slightest impression on her mind, next day she was punished more severely. So it went on for some days; the whippings ever growing harder, and Christie giving no sign that they affected her character in the least.

But her body was as sensitive to blows as any one's, and Christie began to say to herself that she didn't mean to stay at home and be whipped all the days of her life. She was ten years old and able to do a great deal of work, and she would run away and seek her own fortune.

Of course she said nothing of all this to her mother, but one day after the whipping had been unusually severe, she slyly filled her pockets with cakes from the pantry, and went out to make her own way in the world. Knowing that search would be made for her, she determined to walk all day, and through the fields for the most part, so that no one should see her and tell her parents which way she had gone.

She succeeded so well in escaping observation, that her father could not get the least clue of her in

any direction, after she left the house. At last he came to the conclusion that she had been drowned in the river, back of the farm, where she often went to play, and gave up all farther search. So Christie was fairly launched upon the world.

Towards night of the first day of her travels, she stopped at a farm-house and asked if they would like to hire any help. The farmer's wife saw that she looked very bright, and asked her what she could do. Christie recounted the best of her accomplishments. Then said the woman, "Where do you come from? Have you no home?" So Christie made up a long story, of how her father and mother were both dead, and she had lived with an aunt who had starved and abused her, and at last turned her out of the house. But something in her manner made the woman suspect that she was not speaking the truth, so she asked her, "Are you a truthful girl?" Christie fired up in a moment; "It is none of your business," she replied, and started off at a run.

She slept that night in a barn, and the next morning trudged along the highway again, looking for a place to live. But at all the houses they asked her the same question, whether she told the truth; and so she never would stop, longer than to beg for something to eat.

"The truth?" she would say to herself; "why should every body make such a fuss about the truth?

What 's the good of it, I should like to know? You can't wear it, or eat it, and so long as I can work with my hands, whose business is it, what I do with my tongue? I hate the very name of truth, and if I die for it, I 'll find some place where people mind their own affairs, and leave me to talk as I please."

At last as Christie went on and on, she came to a flat and marshy country, where the houses were fewer and poorer than in her own neighborhood. There were no good fences, and the farm-yards instead of being tidy and neat, were all littered with bits of old lumber and broken carts. She passed one or two houses, because they appeared so shabby, and at length coming to one rather more cleanly, she knocked at the door and was bidden to come in. The family were about to sit down to dinner, and so the farmer was in the house. Both he and his wife looked sharply at Christie as she told her story, and to her relief, did not ask her when she had finished, if she was in the habit of speaking the truth. They simply looked at each other as much as to say, "Guess we' d better keep her." They had but one daughter, who was about Christie's age, and it was evident that Christie was a girl who could do a great deal of work. So the farmer put on a very kind look, as he said, "Little girl, if you will stay with us we will give you plenty of fine things to wear, and we will pay you wages for your work; and besides

all this, you shall go to school most of the time, if you wish to." "And won't you mind if I don't always speak the truth?" asked Christie. "Oh, no!" replied the farmer, "I don't care anything about that." So Christie felt sure that she had found a place which exactly suited her, at last, and after dinner, set to work with right good will.

Everything went along beautifully for several days, and she was as happy and content as possible. The people did not seem shocked or grieved, if she told a falsehood, and so as they did not produce any impression, she fell out of the habit of inventing her usual stories.

One morning a man came to the house to buy a horse, which he had understood the farmer offered for sale. Christie knew the horse to be a very vicious one, who had run away many times, and broken more than one wagon all to pieces. But the farmer at once began to tell what a gentle and amiable disposition the horse had. One would have thought to hear him talk, that for speed, strength, endurance, and good-nature, there never was another such horse as this. Only, as he said, it was too good a horse for him, a poor man, to keep. The man seemed to be so entirely deceived by these praises, that Christie pitied him, and while the farmer was gone to the stable to bring the horse out for inspection, she took occasion to tell him the truth about the animal. "I know it

well enough, young missy," said he, "do you mind your business." So after the horse had been looked at, the farmer named a ridiculously high price, which the man agreed at once to give, saying that he would pay half the money on the spot, and the remainder next day. As half the sum named was more than the worth of the horse, the farmer quickly agreed; the money was counted out, and the horse taken away.

The next day the farmer went to the nearest village to make some purchases, but came back at night, in a great rage. He had discovered that most of the money paid for the horse was counterfeit, that is, false money. But his neighbor stoutly denied this, and saying moreover that the horse was sold to him under false pretenses, refused to pay anything more at all. Christie said nothing, but she thought that it served the farmer right, and she began to think that grown people at least cannot get along very well in their dealings with each other, unless they speak the truth.

Shortly after this, Christie found that the farmer's daughter was set to watch her all the time, and scarcely ever did any work herself. More than this, she began to tell false stories to her mother about Christie, who was now often scolded severely and without any cause. One day the farmer's daughter broke a large dish, and told her mother that Christie

had done it, so that Christie received much the severest whipping she ever had in her life. No one had ever told falsehoods about her before, and she began to feel what an ugly sin it was.

One day a peddler came to the house, and Christie was tempted to buy a very pretty ribbon, which he offered to sell for a few cents. So she went to the farmer's wife and asked if she would please to give her a part of her wages, as she wanted some money to use. "Money?" exclaimed the woman, "you don't earn the salt in your porridge!" "But," said Christie, "you promised to give me wages." "What if I did," said the woman? "in this country, people do not keep their promises;" and thereupon gave Christie a smart box on the ear by the way of putting an end to the conversation.

Poor Christie soon found that the promise of clothes meant no more than that of money, for when her own clothing wore out she got only the cast-off garments of the farmer's daughter, and went most of the time in rags. She would have run away if she could, but every night she was locked into her room, and through the day she was watched so closely that it was impossible to escape. In her own home all about her had been truthful, and she had never realized how much trouble and sorrow her own untruthfulness caused. But now she saw what life was among people who had no regard for truth. They

were always trying to deceive one another, and no one could trust another's promise. So there was continual quarrel and strife, and nobody found any real happiness in living.

One day only, Christie went to school. There she found the same trials. It seemed to be the main effort of all the children to tell the worst lies they could about each other to the teacher, and the teacher himself encouraged it, for every day a little before the close of school, he called up some scholar and made him put on a great pair of leathern spectacles. He must watch until he found some other scholar with his eyes not on his book, who was then called up to wear the spectacles and take his place. So it went on, and the scholar who wore the spectacles when school was dismissed, was to be whipped. So you see some one was sure of a flogging every night. None of the scholars really cared to find any one not studying, but after wearing the spectacles for a little time, would call out some one's name against whom they happened to have a grudge, and whether that one's eyes were on his book or not he must march up and take his turn.

It chanced that the farmer's daughter was called out this afternoon, and she, of course, declared that Christie was not studying. Now Christie was entirely absorbed in her book, for it was the first time she had seen one for months. But there was no help for her.

Up to the master's desk she went and put on the spectacles. She might have done like the rest and told a lie to get them off again. But she had heard so many outrageous falsehoods in the course of the day, that she felt no desire to tell another. She could catch nobody looking away from their book, and as she felt the wickedness of an untruth as she never had done before, she had not the smallest disposition to free herself from her danger by telling one. So the school closed while she was on the floor, and she took the daily after-school flogging.

Poor Christie had found a country where nobody cared whether or not she spoke the truth, but it was not at all what she dreamed it would be. Nobody had confidence in her, and she could trust nobody. Everybody was continually in a quarrel, and such a thing as love seemed to be entirely unknown.

But Christie did finally escape. One afternoon she contrived to hide herself in the barn. When she was missed, the whole family set off up and down the road to look for her, while she ran away through the field. By walking all night, she got back once more among people who loved the truth. This time Christie told her true story, and every one believed her. So food and clothes were given to her, and the farmers carried her from house to house in their carts, till at length she came to her own home, entirely cured of her habit of telling falsehoods; and there she lived after that, beloved and happy and contented.

By this little story I hope to make you see that one condition of all the happiness there is in the world, is that each should speak the truth. You have seen in early morning when there was not a breath of wind, some little lake or pond lying perfectly smooth and still, like a mirror in which the trees and houses on the banks and the clouds overhead were perfectly reflected. Now suppose you break all this beautiful peace by throwing a stone into the water; what happens? The ripples from that splash spread out over the surface of the pond, and destroy all the beautiful pictures it contained. Every falsehood we tell, is like a stone thrown into still waters; it breaks up that peace which reflects the beauty of heaven here upon the earth.

It is sometimes hard to tell the exact truth, when that obliges one to confess a fault before others. But we must remember that nothing will make others despise and distrust us so much, as to find that we have deceived them. If we can all remember what the world would be without truth, I think we shall see what the need is that we should all be truthful, for we shall see that no one who is known to tell falsehoods can be trusted or loved. That is one reason for speaking the truth.

But now I have another to give. There is something living and growing within us that we call a soul. Though we do not see it, it lives and grows

just as truly as trees do in the world outside of us. Now every untruth that we tell, is like striking a tree with an axe; it makes an ugly scar in our hearts, and weakens the very life of the soul. Let me tell you a little story about this. Long ago, in the days of enchantment, when there were giants and fairies and magicians, there lived a man neither very good nor very bad, whom we will call Pierre. Pierre was a very decent fellow, who went to church on Sundays, and never committed any dreadful sin on week-days; though at the same time he was in no wise remarkable for his virtues. But one day Pierre fell to wondering about his soul. The Bible and the Priest told him he had a soul, and he had always believed their word, but now for some reason he felt a great longing to know for himself, whether the Bible and the Priest were right. The more Pierre thought about it, the more unsettled and uneasy did he become, till at last he resolved to visit a certain great magician, who lived in a neighboring city, to see if he could not find some way to set the question at rest.

So when he had found the magician he asked him, "Have I a soul?" "Yes!" "But how do you know it?" asked Pierre. "I see them," was the reply. "But can you make me see my own soul?" asked Pierre again. "I can," said the magician, "but only on these conditions; I can separate your

soul from your body, so that it will live outside of you; but in this case, all men can see it as well as yourself, and it will be continually at your side wherever you turn. Besides this, it will be a twelvemonth and a day, before you can have your soul put back into your body again." "I accept the conditions," said Pierre, "only let me see my soul and know that I have got one." So the magician waved his wand, repeating a form of words, and lo! there stood at Pierre's side a figure, very much resembling himself, except that its face was somewhat wrinkled and scarred, and its dress, which had originally been white, was much soiled and torn. "Are you my soul?" asked Pierre. The figure said nothing, but rather mournfully nodded its head. "Well, I must say," said Pierre, "I hoped to see something more beautiful." "You alone are to blame," said the magician; "for the soul is just what men make of it. But now go home, and come to me again when a year and a day are gone. I will then put your soul back in its proper place."

So Pierre went out into the streets; the people whom he met all stared to see the figure marching closely at his side, and always keeping its place, no matter how quickly he might turn. But in the city, he did not care, for nobody knew him, and it was dark before he reached home, so that he escaped the observation of his friends until he came to his own

house. Here his housekeeper stared at the figure, much too astonished even to ask who it was. Now Pierre was a little ashamed to own it as his soul, so he said, "This is a brother of mine just home from a long journey." Thereupon the figure uttered a sharp cry, and when Pierre looked round, it was all doubled up as if with a terrible pain in the side. But it said not a word, and the pain after a time seemed to wear away. Now the soul being out of his body, Pierre felt no twinge of conscience when he told an untruth. The soul outside suffered for it, but that did not trouble Pierre, and he soon became the most outrageous liar ever heard of. And day by day, as Pierre went on, the figure by his side grew shabbier and more wrinkled, and continually shriveled away.

At first people shunned him, because of this mysterious figure always at his side. But his neighbors became accustomed to it after a while, and began to pity Pierre. He would not work, complaining always that he was sick, and went about telling sorrowful tales of his pain and poverty, though in fact he was entirely healthy, and lived like a prince on what people gave him. He would lie not only to get a living, but just for the pleasure of deceiving people, and getting them into quarrels with each other. But every day the figure at his side grew thinner and paler, till at last Pierre began to say to himself, "If this sort of thing goes on, I shan't have any soul at

all to put back into my body when the twelve-month comes round." So in great fear and trouble he went off to beg the magician either to restore him his soul at once, before it withered up out of sight, or to tell how he could bring it back to its former size and health. But the magician would tell him nothing save to come when the year and the day had expired, and sent him off again.

As Pierre went out upon the street in a dejected and absent-minded mood, an old woman accosted him, and asked him the way to a certain place. If he had been thinking what he was doing, he would doubtless have sent her far out of her way, for the pleasure of thinking he had deceived her; but instead he told her the direction, truthfully, and when he looked up again he thought that the figure at his side appeared brighter. This put him into so much better spirits, that when he met a man whom he had cheated a few days before in a bargain, he at once confessed that he had told an untruth, and set the matter straight. When he again looked about, the figure really appeared quite beautiful, and Pierre could not mistake the cause of the change. He went home and made it his first business to right all the wrongs he had done, and correct all the falsehoods he had set afloat; and day by day he grew more pleased with the new beauty and health which came back to his soul. He learned to cling to the truth with much

more scrupulous exactness than ever he had done before, and when the twelve-month was done, he went back to the magician proudly, his soul without wrinkle or scar or stain.

Of course it is not true that any man's soul can be separated from his body and both live: that I have only imagined. But it is true that if it could be, we should see it so shriveled up by lies, and so made fair and beautiful by truth, just as Pierre's was. What I want you to remember is that though you do not see your own souls, just this happens to them, according as you are truthful or untruthful.

Now I have given you two reasons for speaking the truth, first, that without it there can be no love or peace between you and others; secondly, that every falsehood makes an ugly scar in your own souls. If you will always keep these reasons in mind, I am sure that no temptation can lead you to say a word that you know to be untrue.

IV.

HUMILITY.

In honor preferring one another.—*Romans*, ii. 10.

A NOTED clergyman once preached on a Western steamboat from the text, "In honor preferring one another." As he tells the story, the passengers were grouped together on the main deck, and appeared to listen very intently. He really thought as he saw their eyes now glistening with enthusiasm, now filling with tears, that he was making an impression which would lead them to prefer one another. So the service closed with great interest. But just as the last notes of the concluding hymn were dying away, the dinner gong sounded, and the congregation at once became a mob, pushing and scrambling for the best places at table, and the first chance at the best dishes. That showed how little he had taught them, after all, about the duty of preferring one another.

Now I know very well that every child here is too well-bred ever to engage in such a scramble as that. I know you would never crowd in to dinner like cattle. But though good manners are worth a great deal, they are not everything, especially in this matter of preferring one another. For you must know that people who pass outwardly for gentlemen and

ladies, are often very selfish, and when they can do so without a breach of etiquette, show it very plainly in their action. You must not think of this saying as only meaning that we should politely give place to another at table or in conversation. This is well so far as it goes, but it does not go very far. When we come to give up to another a place that we really prize, out of love for that other, and because we would rather see him happy in the place than to have it ourselves, that is what the saying means.

Listen while I try to tell you, by means of a few stories, how noble this is. Perhaps in the course of your reading you have chanced upon the story of some large family, the father of which was too poor to give all his boys an education, and so all the rest have cheerfully worked, and saved, and given up many of their bright dreams, to send one among them to college. Think of that, you boys who enjoy so many advantages without realizing that they cost a great deal. What if your brothers and sisters, who thirst for knowledge as much as you, were working hard from morning till night, denying themselves pleasure, and putting aside their own hopes, in order that you might attend school. Should you feel that you could ever repay them? Or should you feel that you could ever sufficiently love and admire them for having preferred you before themselves? Let me tell you there are many children doing that very thing to-day.

There were once at school together, two boys who were fast friends, and who were, beyond question, the best and brightest boys of their class. In that school there was a scholarship-prize, to be given to the one who, both in lessons and deportment, should best satisfy his teachers. Both of these boys worked hard for it and expected to get it. They were fond of thinking how they should feel, when they stood before their classmates to receive the prize and afterwards carried it home to their friends.

Now it so happened that they were so nearly even at the end of the term, that their teachers were unable to decide between them. To say that either was first would be doing wrong to the other, and yet there was only one prize. So when the day came, it was announced that the two were equally deserving, and the matter could only be decided by lot. The one upon whom the lot fell should have the prize, and the other must be content with knowing that he was just as well entitled to it. So a number of little papers were put into a box, upon one of which was written the word "prize," and they were to draw by turns until one of them should get that piece.

Of course both were anxious. But one of them was the son of poor parents, and as his school-days ended there, it was his last chance to win such an honor. The other and older was to go on and complete his studies.

The drawing went forward, and presently the latter boy drew from the box and held up before them all, a paper upon which they could all read "Prize." Then there was loud applause, and for an instant the victor felt his heart full of happiness. But turning to his rival, he saw the shade of disappointment upon his face; the quivering lip; the coming tears which he was manfully fighting to hold back, and which told how much he prized the place he had lost. Quick as thought it flashed upon his mind that for his rival this was the last day of school, while there were many honors that *he* might work for. Instantly he stepped forward, holding out in his hand the paper he had drawn, and said, "I acknowledge you to be the better scholar, and freely give to you the prize." Then indeed a shout went up, and the tears which ill-luck could hardly wring from the younger boy, made a rainbow in his eyes, as his smile of gratitude shone through them.

What do you think of such generosity? I think that if the boy who thus gave up what fairly belonged to him, had lived to be as old as Methuselah, he could never have done a nobler, or more graceful or Christian act.

Now I trust you know what the Bible means when it says, "In honor preferring one another."

Here now is a story for the little ones, with fairies in it, and I hope it may be entertaining, though if

the fairies do not act in an interesting way of themselves, I cannot promise to make them.

Long ago, as you will read in the books, England was full of elves and fays. In the hills they had great caverns lighted by diamonds, carpeted by flowers and filled with the music of running brooks. Here they dwelt through the day, but at night the rocks opened, and they came forth in troops to dance under the moonlight. There were fairies good and fairies mischievous; some who spent their time in playing pranks upon mortals, and others who delighted to make little children happy. They very often came disguised as little old women, as Cinderella's god-mother, you will remember, came to her.

Not far away from the castle where the king lived part of the year, under the shadow of a lonely hillside, dwelt a forester and his two children. The oldest was a boy just getting into his teens, and, as boys are somewhat apt to do, he thought himself a great deal more of a personage than he really was. He had once been to the town, and was never weary of astonishing his little sister with tales of what he had there seen and done. And generally, he was wont to display before her admiring eyes his superior wisdom. She, some years younger, and very beautiful, was excessively proud and fond of her big brother. The only bit of the great world that she

had seen, was once when the King rode that way, upon a hunt. For the rest, she devoutly believed what Richard told her, and when he was away in the forest with his father, drew pictures in her mind, and dreamed dreams of what should come to pass, all the day long.

One day as twilight was falling, Ethel sat in the door of her cottage, thinking what she would do if she were rich, when some one said over her shoulder, "Child, would you like to come with me?" She turned her head, and no doubt any one of you could tell me what she saw. Of course it was a fairy, disguised as a little, humpbacked, old dame, leaning upon her staff, with good nature shining in her merry eyes, and even in the very tips of her long, crooked nose and chin. Ethel was not in the least frightened, the old lady was so little and so pleasant, and besides, with a quick instinct, she knew who she was. Still she did not recover from her astonishment, until the fairy had repeated, "Would you like to go with me?" Ethel did not in the least know where, but she felt that it must be to some good place. "Oh, if you please," she said, "there is my brother Richard, who is very clever. He is older than I, and knows ever so much. I am sure you would like him better than me. Cannot you wait a little till he comes home, and take him?"

"Yes, I know Richard," replied the fairy, some-

what coldly; "but I cannot wait. However, you may tell him that if he will be in front of the ledge, above the pine grove, at moonrise, he will see and hear something to his advantage."

So saying, she vanished, and Ethel rose in all haste to meet her brother. Taking him aside, she told him what had occurred, and he was good enough to say that she did quite right. "For," said he, "I shall make a much finer figure among the fairies than you would."

He was vain, you see, and I fear there are other boys afflicted in that way. The moon did not rise till late that night; nevertheless, as soon as he had snatched a little supper, Richard set off for the hillside, leaving many injunctions with his sister not to follow. "For," said he, "your presence might spoil everything."

Having arrived before the ledge, he sat down upon the trunk of a fallen tree to wait, with what patience he could, for the appointed hour. At length the yellow tip of the new moon rose above the trees, and Richard began to hear music beneath the ground. Just as the moon sailed clear of the horizon, the great ledge swung open and the fairies came rolling out like apples from an overturned basket. The boy caught glimpses within of the dazzling flash of precious stones, and saw that the mountain must contain enormous riches. He pressed hotly forward, so that

as soon as the entrance should be cleared he might rush in. He was in such eager haste that he did not notice last of all the Queen of the fairies herself, issuing forth, carried upon a tiny throne. He crowded rudely past her, and already had his hand upon the edge of the rock, when it swung to and caught his fingers in a crevice; not with force enough to hurt them seriously, but still enough to hold them prisoner, and make him roar lustily with pain.

The elves all set up a great shout at sight of him in this misfortune; but the Queen touched the rock with her sceptre, and it opened a little, till he could draw his aching fingers out. She bade him show his hand to her, and laying her wand across it, instantly it was made whole and sound. Then, being free from pain, he ceased his dismal howling, and bethought himself to make his best bow before her majesty. "I have summoned you here," she said, "to ask what it is you most desire, since I mean to teach you a useful lesson, and to put you in the way of being a great man." "I desire most of all," said the boy, "great riches, that I may go to Court and then become a nobleman — perhaps, after a while, even King." "But you have a sister," the Queen reminded him; "do you wish nothing for her?" "What, that little chit?" said Richard. "She never would make a fine lady. No, give *me* riches, and I

will buy her a new dress; and, when I am a gentleman, sometimes I will hunt this way, and give her a piece of gold." "Truly," replied the Queen, "you are a generous youth, considering that you are here by favor of your sister. Now, listen; I shall redeem the first part of my promise, by teaching you a lesson, and that lesson will be to show you what you really are."

So saying, she once more touched him with her wand, and lo! he was suddenly transformed into a little grunting pig. He kept his own mind, for it seems that fairies never had power to change that; but still he could do nothing but run up and down and grunt. He was hungry, O, so hungry! and felt a sudden desire for acorns. So he went poking his nose through the grass, scattering the fairies hither and thither. Especially if he saw a group of them perched upon a large leaf, he thought they must be hiding acorns, and drove them away. As for them, they jumped upon his back and pricked him with thistles, until he squealed so that the Queen was obliged to stop her ears.

All this time he knew that he was a pig, and felt dreadfully ashamed of himself, yet he could not behave any better than he did.

Now, after her brother had gone, Ethel could not sleep; and when the moon rose, she thought there would be no harm if she went up toward the ledge,

and kept back out of sight. She heard the fairies shout, but did not come within sight of the group until the Queen began her speech. She could not hear what was said, but, keeping watch, she saw her brother transformed into a pig.

Full of grief and indignation, she darted forward, and would have attacked the Queen, but the uplifted wand seemed to chain her where she stood. "You naughty, ugly, wicked Queen," she began, "give me back my beautiful brother." "That is not the way to address fairies, when you wish something from them," replied the Queen. Then, waving her wand three times about her head, the fairy troop, the pig and all seemed to vanish into the air, and Ethel stood once more before the little old dame, who beamed upon her good-naturedly.

Ethel now began to weep and beseech the fairy that she would find her brother and restore him to his right shape. "Impossible," said the Queen, for it was she. "You alone can do that. But dry your eyes, child; trust in me, and all will yet be well." Then she bade Ethel take her crutch, and as soon as she touched it she felt herself growing light as air. It was not long before she found that the trees and the hills were gliding beneath her, and clapping her hands with glee, she exclaimed, "Why, we are actually flying." And so they were, far, far away; and yet so swiftly that almost in a breath they alighted in

a magnificent garden, before a palace. Dazzling lights shone from all the windows, and among the trees. People in brilliant dresses, covered with jewels, were walking about, while the most delicious music swelled and died away with the soft evening breeze.

Ethel caught the sparkle of something upon her arm, as she stood under a lamp, and looking down she found it to be a diamond bracelet. All at once she discovered that she was dressed completely, like the others, only with much more magnificence. And the fairy whispered in her ear, "It is a grand ball, given by the young Prince. Go in, child; be happy, and forget your brother."

At these words, Ethel's grief again burst forth, and she besought the fairy Queen to find Richard, and dress him in the jewels which she wore. "I shall be much happier," she said, "to wait in my rags at the Palace gate and see him as he passes by." "Well," replied the Queen, "go in then and find your brother; he will be there." So Ethel eagerly sprang forward and entered the palace.

As she entered the halls, every one was amazed at her beauty, and many were the whispered conjectures who the lovely young Princess might be. She moved here and there apparently seeking some one, and there was a shade of sadness and expectancy upon her face which made her appear all the more

beautiful. Many invitations she received to join in the dance, but she excused herself.

At length the Prince himself honored her with an invitation, and she danced with him more than once. Certainly he was very good and very graceful, and more than all, he was without doubt desperately in love with her. But though she was charmed by his company, she could not forget Richard, and as often as the Prince asked her name, she said, "Let me first find my brother." Suddenly there was a great uproar. Ladies screamed, courtiers laughed, and seemed to be trying to drive something out of the Palace. Ethel turned in wonderment to see what might be the matter, and there she saw a little panting, squealing pig, darting hither and thither, knocking the gentlemen's feet from under them, and getting himself terribly entangled in the long dresses of the ladies.

With a cry of joy Ethel sprang through the crowd and caught him up in her arms. He appeared to know her, and as best he was able testified his joy at having found her. That is to say he looked up into her face, grunted in a satisfied way, and wiggled his little tail incessantly. No one dared laugh now that the beautiful Princess had taken the pig under her protection. While all kept silence, she walked slowly out of the Palace, and nobody was so ill-bred as to follow her.

Long she wandered about the garden, trying to find the good fairy; and all the while she held her poor brother close to her heart, wept over him, and called him an endless number of pet names. But the fairy could nowhere be found, and at last in despair, Ethel seated herself in a little arbor, to wait for the morning, when she thought she would try and find her way back home.

The light fell through the trees, and as she looked down into the pig's face, she thought his eyes had a more human look. She watched for a moment, and felt sure that a change was taking place. And so it was, for her rich love, more potent than all fairy wands, was slowly restoring Richard to his own form. The fairy could only make him appear, outwardly, what he was inwardly; but his sister's love was able to change his spirit, so that a beautiful human form belonged to him.

You may be sure Ethel was half wild with delight, when she saw her brother coming to himself again; and the more caresses she heaped upon him, the faster the process went forward. At last he was fully restored, and able to say in his own voice, only softer and sweeter than it used to be, "Oh, sister! how beautiful you are! how beautiful you are! Now you are really a Princess and I will be your servant."

At these words, the bushes beside them rustled, and out stepped the Fairy Queen, this time as a

Queen again, with her magnificent sceptre and crown. "So you have learned your lesson well, I am glad to see," she said, "and are at length willing to prefer some one else before yourself."

Ethel was inclined to be a little indignant at this speech, for she was so good that she did not think her brother had need of such a lesson. Richard, however, made haste to acknowledge his error, and the Queen, entirely satisfied, promised them her favor, telling them at the same time that a noble mind was worth more than all she could bestow. To conclude, Ethel married the Prince, and Richard rose to be a great man, beloved by everybody; for whenever he felt inclined to put himself before others, he always remembered how he had been a pig, and what saved him from being a pig all his life.

I suppose none of you children have any fear that you will be changed into pigs, but I hope you will remember that the disposition sometimes shines through the face in such a way as to suggest a pig, very unpleasantly, to others. And let us all remember that to prefer one another in honor, as it raises us above the beasts and makes us human, also makes us disciples of Jesus and children of God.

V.

TEMPER.

Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.—*James iv. 7.*

ONE summer day of an olden time, when your great, great grandfathers and grandmothers were girls and boys together, and when, where cities and villages now stand, there stretched away broad meadows and shady groves, a group of bright-eyed farmers' children, as fair as the cloudless sky above their heads, and as light-hearted as the birds whose songs blended with their merry laugh, went romping through the fields of new-mown hay. Nowhere can one be gayer than in the hay-field. The odor of the bleaching grass steals away all care, and seems to carry the freshness which the sun takes out of the sweet-scented clover, into one's heart.

So these children went up and down the long mowers' swaths, singing, shouting, throwing at each other the half-made hay, and making the distant hills echo their laughter; not so much because anything really funny occurred, as because they felt so happy that they must laugh.

Suddenly, as though all their hearts had been touched by a flash of lightning, every particle of

mirth died out of them. Where a moment before all had been gayety and life, they stood with pale faces and hushed breath, all eyes fixed upon the two oldest boys of the group.

These boys had been lashing each other with wisps of hay, in high glee, until one, by accident, in seizing a new handful, had grasped a large thistle and struck his companion with it across his face. He did not in the least know what he had done, and the first intimation he had that their play was interrupted was a stinging blow from his companion, which sent him reeling backward. Now, just as the attention of the rest was called to the scene, he had gathered himself up and sprung back to return the blow.

There the two stood, while the rest waited in terror for what should follow — the one sullenly guarding himself from attack, the other with distended nostril, eyes flashing fire, and arm raised to strike. An instant they stood thus; then the one who was about to strike drew back his arm, turned on his heel, and walked quickly away.

It was all done in less time than I have taken to tell it, but in none too short a time to spoil all the happiness of the party. It mattered not now how bright the sun might shine, there was a heavy cloud over them, and their hearts were gloomy. The birds were still singing, the bees humming, and from afar

came the ring of the mowers' scythes. Nothing of it all did they hear, for they could think only of the angry scene they had just witnessed.

Silently plucking at the grasses they still held in their hands, they slowly moved on in the direction taken by the boy who had refused to fight, keeping as by a common instinct, apart from him who had struck the blow; a blow not only upon the other's cheek, but to all their sport.

He alone affected a hollow kind of mirth, whistled, laughed, and in a mocking way made remarks not very complimentary to the courage of his playmate. The other had walked across the meadow and thrown himself down in the shade of a huge tree, under which the workmen ate their dinners and kept their drink.

Thither the rest followed; and, as they came up to him, he was forced to hear a few loud and bitter taunts. But, though rather nervous and pale, he still kept silent, and so the whole party found themselves seated upon the smoothly-shaven turf, trying hard to look and act as though nothing had happened.

Some one proposed that they should tell stories, and one or two fairy tales were attempted. These, however, were not very well received. Instead of that close attention which children are wont to pay to such tales, the wandering eyes and listless looks told that no enthusiasm was to be roused that day by stories of Elfinland.

At last one happened to mention the Devil, and suddenly all seemed to be interested. In that day almost every one believed in the Devil, horns and hoofs, and many wonderful incidents were related of people who had seen him and felt his power. First, the minister's daughter had to tell what she had found in a book in her father's library, about a great man called Luther, to whom the Devil had many times appeared. Others were ready, and the stories were coming thick and fast, when up spoke the hot-tempered lad, who a little while before had wanted to fight, saying that all such stories were nonsense, for there was no such thing as a devil.

He was the son of a man about whom there was some mystery, because he seemed to have a better education than most of the little farming community. Still, as he had fallen quietly into their ways, no open distrust of him had shown itself. Whether the boy had heard it from his father, or gathered it from books which the more zealous Puritans would not be likely to own, certain it is that he entirely disbelieved in any such being as a Devil; and now, when his companions rather held aloof from him, he showed his resentment by calling them fools for believing such silly trash. They, of course, were horrified. Deny the Devil! Why, it was almost as bad as denying God. And so they all set to work to refute his terrible doctrine. Why, there was Deacon

A., who only a little time before, going through a piece of woods, after nightfall, had seen the Devil's great fiery eyes looking over a stump. Moreover, his black horns had been dimly visible, and he was distinctly heard to switch his tail among the bushes.

The young heretic of course maintained that it might have been a belated cow; but this explanation was scouted. Then there was old Goody Gloom, who lived in a little hut all by herself, down under the hill, and who said that many a time the Devil had come down her rude chimney of sticks and mud, and blown the fire in her face. As well as she could for the smoke in her eyes, she had seen his black form moving about the hearth; but, more than all, had heard his fiendish chuckle, as he swept up the chimney again.

To this it was replied that Goody Gloom was mad, and no wonder the wind played pranks with such a crazy old chimney as hers. Then they quoted Scripture to him; all the texts they could think of in which the Devil was mentioned; till at last some one chanced to think of the verse, "Resist the Devil and he will flee from you." "That is a very good text, children," broke in a deep voice behind them, and for the first time they were made aware that some one was overhearing their controversy.

As they turned about, there stood the father of the boy against whom they were defending their belief.

So busily were they all engaged, that they had not seen his approach; and, with a half-amused smile upon his kindly face, he had stood for some time, unperceived, listening to their talk.

"'Resist the Devil and he will flee from you.' That is a very good text," he now repeated.

"There *is* a Devil, is there not, sir?" they cried out to him. All but one, and he held his peace, before his father.

For answer he only seated himself in their midst, and proposed to tell them a short fable. "Oh! that would be fine!". So they settled themselves as close as they could sit about him, and signified by their quietness that they were ready for him to begin.

"There was once," said he, "in a certain well regulated barnyard, a young gosling, just turning the corner of ganderhood, who gave his mother goose much uneasiness. Beyond the yard and the pond and a little stretch of pasture land, over which the fowls were accustomed to roam, was a deep, dark wood, toward which this gosling had always turned a longing eye; and he made no secret of his determination to visit that unknown place some day, and explore its mysteries.

Now, there was in the yard the tradition of a fox, who had once been seen prowling about, and who was supposed to have his habitation in that wood. So you may suppose it was with no little alarm that

the goose mother heard her wayward son announcing his favorite project, and trying to persuade his companions to join him. She tried to frighten him with stories that she had heard of this fox, and he dared to say that if there was such a creature, he was a peaceable enough beast, after all.

The geese and the ducks and the hens were all securely penned every night at sundown, and this the gosling took in high dudgeon. "As though there were anything to be afraid of," he said; "and as if they didn't know how to take care of themselves."

So every night he hissed and dodged about, and made a great ado about going into the pen. But once safely inside, the geese from their corner, and the ducks from theirs, and the hens from their roost overhead, began to tell wonderful stories about this fox, until they all fell asleep. Very likely some of them, especially the roosters, dreamed about him all night; for every now and then, one would awake out of his sleep with a frantic crow, as though he were already in the jaws of the fox, and was giving warning to the others to flee while yet there was time.

But in these twilight talks among the fowls, there were, in truth, some marvellous tales related. One or two of the older ducks had seen this fox in the daytime, while they were taking their swim upon the pond; and one of the hens, who by chance had been shut out of the pen one night, and forced to roost in

a tree till morning, declared that she had not been able to sleep a wink by reason of his prowling about, and making continual efforts to climb the tree.

These, having nobody to contradict them, vied with each other, who should tell the most astonishing story about the fox. And the others, not to be outdone, would always cap the tale with something more wonderful that they had heard. It was told how this fox breathed fire and smoke from his nostrils; that he was a great deal larger than old Tom, the cart-horse; that on his feet he had claws like a hawk, only a great deal longer; that his mouth was filled with long, sharp teeth, like the prongs of a pitchfork; that on his head, where ears should be, rose long and slender horns, ever so high, upon which, after he had eaten his fill, he strung his prey, as children string raspberries upon a spear of grass. And his tail! all agreed that never was such a tail read of or heard of elsewhere. It was something like a snake, only a great deal longer than any snake ever was; longer than the rope coiled up on the barn floor, which was used to weigh out hay; and after he had filled his stomach and his horns with luckless fowls, he would bind up great loads of them with this tail, and carry them on his back like a peddler's pack.

As to his manner of taking his prey, opinion was divided. The old hen, who had seen him, main-

tained that by means of his claws he could climb wherever he could find anything to grasp, strong enough to hold him. All that saved her that night, she averred, was that she had chosen rather a small tree, the branches of which broke off with his weight as often as he tried to climb up to her. As it was, she said, the tree was stripped as bare as a bean-pole, all except the few twigs at the very top upon which she sat.

The ducks, on the other hand, affirmed that the hen must be mistaken, for when they had seen him he used his tail, on the end of which was a claw, like a long arm, with which he reached out and grasped his victims. They related that he came down to the bank, and stretched this out over the water after them; and, if one of the ducks remembered rightly, one of the flock at that time, who was not quite quick enough in getting out of the way, had been seized and devoured on the spot. At any rate, these ducks had seen him in the daytime, and the hen only in the dark, so that the majority listened to their report.

But nothing of all this convinced the young gander of whom mention has been made, and as he was very confident and esteemed himself quite an important personage, he was not slow to express his opinions. These were in effect not merely that the stories of the older ones were partly false, but that they were

wholly without foundation. In fact nobody should make him believe that there was any fox at all until he had seen him with his own eyes.

He did not fail to point out to his companions that such an awful monster as this was painted, would not leave a single thing with feathers on its back alive at the end of a year. Moreover were not *his* eyes as good as any one's, and if anybody ever saw a fox why should not he!

So although he did not make much impression upon his own tribe, nor upon the ducks, he finally persuaded some of the more venturesome young chickens to join him in his favorite project of exploring the wood. And now behold them cautiously stealing out of the yard one by one in the early morning, while yet their mothers were warming themselves in the first rays of the sun, standing about with one foot drawn up into their feathers, their heads nestled down into the ruffles about their necks, and their eyes half shut in a morning nap. Out stole the adventurers, picking up food here and there as though only in pursuit of breakfast, till all, without having excited any notice, were met together in the field. Then the young gander assumed the lead, and stalking majestically before, at once made directly for the forest. Arrived there they plunged at once into the shadows, and throughout the long forenoon they had a most lovely time. For the

leader there were marshes and pools, in which he paddled to his heart's content; for the others there was plenty of the most fertile scratching ground, and all the bushes were so covered with great flies that they could almost pick up their breakfast without moving a step.

At length they gathered themselves together to dress their feathers and congratulate each other on their good fortune. How they did pity the poor barnyard slaves who were prevented by their foolish fears from joining them. There they were, toiling in the hot sun, and doubtless without having yet found half a dinner, "While we," said they, "have all the time enjoyed a most delightful shade."

Never would they go back again to that tiresome place, for now it was perfectly evident that there was no more to fear in the wood than upon the roost at home.

They had just arrived at this most satisfactory conclusion, when out from the bushes before them peeped the head of Master Fox himself, who had been attracted by their loud cackling. Evidently he selected the goose, as being the largest of the flock, for his victim, and kept his eye upon him. As for the rest, they were at once frightened without knowing why, and with shrill screams sought safety in the branches of the trees.

The goose was afraid of nothing, and quietly stood

still. The fox, finding that he made no effort to escape, came slowly forward to see what it meant; when the gander politely accosted him, and begged his pardon for the unruly chicks, who had created such a disturbance. "The fact is," said he, "they have all their lives been told silly tales about a fox, said to be a terrible enemy to all fowls, and by some thought to inhabit this wood, and I dare say they imagined you might be he. But in me," continued he proudly, "you will find one who never gave ear to these foolish fancies."

"Here is easy game," thought the fox; but he knew how to be polite. So he courteously offered the hospitality of the wood, saying that he was an old resident there, and the roosters might rest easy about the fox, for in all his rambles he had met with no such creature. "Near by," said he, "I have a very pleasant cave in which I live, and if you will allow me to point it out, perhaps you may sometimes be glad to take shelter in it in case of a shower."

The gander would be obliged and delighted. "Perhaps," said the fox, hoping to get another meal out of them, "your friends might like to come also;" and he cast his eye up to the branches upon which they sat. But a hoarse cackle told plainly that their prejudice was unconquerable, and so the fox and the goose marched off together.

As soon as they were out of sight, the roosters

looked at each other in dismay, and began to ask what was to be done. They did not have long to consider, however, for presently a few frightened shrieks, and then a sound as of crunching of bones, made them know that their worst fears were realized, and that the poor gander had met his doom. Then of one accord they set up a furious clamor, and running, flying, scrambling they made the utmost speed out of the forest. Nor did they stop till, panting and bruised, they found themselves once more in the barnyard. Then, when the fowls were gathered at night, they told such stories as made every heart quake with fear, and eclipsed the imagination of the oldest among them.

"That is the fable," said the story-teller, "now, who will tell me the moral?" "I know," spoke up one of the youngest of the group, "there is a Devil, but he doesn't have any horns." "Well, hardly that," said the story-teller smiling, "it is rather that whatever fanciful stories may have arisen about the Devil, there is something devilish to be afraid of and to shun and to fight against. As the foolishness of this silly goose, so will be yours, if you think that because these stories about a devil who can be seen are untrue, therefore you will never be called upon to resist the Devil.

"What was it," said the gentleman, turning to his son, "what was it that prompted you to strike your

playmate, when if you had stopped to think only an instant you might have known that he meant you no harm? Was it not something evil in your own heart that you ought to have resisted? What matters it to you that these tales that the others tell about a devil with horns and hoofs, and fiery eyes, are false, while there is something evil in yourself, which you have not learned to conquer. That is the Devil that you have to fear, your own ungovernable temper. But it is said, 'Resist the Devil and he will flee from you.' How true that is, may be seen in the conduct of that boy whom you struck. The devil in his heart whispered, 'Strike back,' but he resisted only for an instant, as I saw, and he was master of himself again."

Then said he to all the children, what I wish all children would take to heart,—learn well that there will be many struggles between evil thoughts and good thoughts in your own souls. These evil thoughts and wrong feelings are the real Devil, and no matter what foolish stories may be told, this devil you will have to meet and fight. If you do not resist him he will lead you into evil and ruin. If you determine to put him down, he soon flies from you, and leaves with you a victory, which means safety and peace."

VI.

GOOD AND BAD SEED.

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—*Gal.*, vi. 7.

THERE was once a farmer, who was called very rich by all his neighbors, but who wanted so much to be richer than he was, that he could not content himself with the profits of his ordinary crops of wheat and corn.

In that country, no one had ever tried to raise tobacco, and this farmer, having heard that a great deal of money could be made from the plant, became very anxious to try the experiment.

One day a genuine Yankee peddler, with his lumbering red cart filled with all sorts of goods and knick-knacks, came that way, and chancing to call upon the farmer at his dinner hour, the two were soon deeply engaged in trying to beat each other at a bargain.

The peddler brought forth a coat, an apple-paring machine, a quantity of earthen and tin dishes, a patent milking-stool, and other attractive commodities; but the farmer could not agree with him upon a price for any of them.

At length out came a box of garden-seeds. Did

the farmer want any thing in that line? The farmer "didn't exactly know." Had the peddler any tobacco seed? Certainly! Down went his hand into the depths of the cart, and after some groping, brought up a little calico bag, in which was a quantity of very small seeds; enough to make a man's fortune, the peddler blandly said.

There was some further haggling about its worth, but in the end the farmer paid a handsome price, and became the possessor of it, together with certain information in regard to the time and method of planting, which the peddler was very ready to impart without charge.

So in early spring of the following year, the farmer prepared extensive hot-beds, with great care and at considerable expense. All the neighborhood wondered what was going forward, but he kept it a close secret.

The seed was planted under glass, and in due time, up came the little plants. Then some one guessed that the farmer was putting in a crop of tobacco, and all the country-side at once took deep interest in the result of the experiment. Day after day, as the young plants were taken from the hot-bed and transplanted into the fields, men would come and sit upon the fence watching the operation. And as they grew up, all who passed that way were sure to stop and take a look at the farmer's tobacco-field.

For a time he was full of triumph at the result. He bought a book which gave pictures of the full-grown plant, and told him how to cure it. Over and over he counted the gain he would get from its sale, with great satisfaction. But after a while the plant began to send up a long, slender stem above the leaves, which he did not find in the picture. This troubled him, but he held his peace, thinking it might be a different variety. People came and inspected his field and went away laughing. This troubled him more. He had certain uneasy suspicions which he did not like to acknowledge to himself.

At length the stalk put forth a cluster of little yellow flowers, and as he stood looking at it dubiously one morning, a man came up and said, "Well, neighbor, you have a fine crop of mullein there!"

Mullein! The farmer had never taken much notice of that, as it is only a weed. But down into his pasture he went straightway, and brought up a specimen to compare. Sure enough he had spent his money and his labor to raise a harvest of thrifty weeds.

I suppose if ever a man went into a fury of rage and disappointment, he was that man. It was of no avail, you see, that he wanted to raise tobacco. He had planted mullein, and he had nothing but mullein to reap.

Now it is a very important part of Christ's teach-

ing, that whatever a man shall sow, not only in his field, but in the garden of his soul, that he must also reap. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles," he said. So if you plant in your minds the seeds of anger, and evil, and discontent, that is the only fruit you can gather in after years. If you would have a harvest of goodness and love and peace, you must sow their seed in the spring-time of your lives.

Riding through the country in autumn, you will find some fields of grain standing straight and free of weeds, and this the reapers will bind into beautiful, shining bundles. In other fields you will see clusters of stout thistles mingled with the grain, and the reapers at work with gloved hands binding thistles and wheat together into awkward shapes. Now and then the field of a careless farmer will be so overrun with weeds that the grain cannot be bound into sheaves at all, but only roughly scraped up with forks and rakes.

Now in most human lives the thistles are mingled with the wheat. There are a few in which no weeds seem to grow, and a few which appear to bear nothing but weeds. But it is all a question what seed has been sown. If thistles were planted, few or many thistles will come up, and nobody can help it. That is God's law, which you may read in any garden, and which we all find to be true in our own experience.

The seed of hate will no more blossom into love, than roses will grow upon a bean-stalk. Every thing bears fruit of its own kind, and if we would have no weeds in our lives, we must be careful not to plant them.

Children must be especially careful what kind of seeds they put into their minds, for though the weeds of evil thoughts and evil habits can some of them be rooted up, others get so strong a hold, that they will grow in spite of everything. Many grown-up children are very negligent in this matter, and I suppose it is partly because they do not know that whatever they put into the mind will grow; and partly because it seems so hard to realize that little things may grow to be so very large.

If you did not know any thing about it, for example, how hard it would be for you to believe that a tall oak, almost as high as the church-steeple, would come from a little acorn, dozens of which you can cram into your pocket. So a boy will read or listen to an evil story, only thinking that he is amused by it, and forgetting that the memory of it is an evil seed in his soul,— or if he does remember what it is, he will often think it too small to be of consequence. Now you children know as well as I can tell you, that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." But there are these two mistakes which children are apt to make, that of forgetting some-

times, in their fun or excitement, how all the time little seeds of good and evil are dropping into their souls; and that of forgetting how some of the smallest of these seeds may grow into the largest plants.

I should like to make you feel some of the consequences of these mistakes, and so help you to guard against them. A troop of children, who lived, I suppose, where spring comes a little earlier than it does to us — over in England, perhaps — once went a-Maying together. They had crowned their Queen with flowers, and gathered all the blossoms they could carry, long before the sun was half way down the Western sky. They had been playing up and down a long hillside, the top of which was crowned with a heavy wood. At length some one proposed that they should explore this wood. Away they went hand in hand, and their merry laughter was soon echoing among the trees.

Soon after entering the wood, the children perceived that it was only a narrow belt, beyond which were open fields again. But judge of their astonishment upon emerging from the other side, to find themselves in a large and beautiful garden. Such brilliant flowers they had never seen; such delicious perfumes they had never breathed before. There was the heliotrope clambering over the tops of tall trees from which the flowers hung in mammoth clusters like grapes. Mignonette was growing as

high as Indian-corn, and roses and camellias as large as dinner-plates were gently nodding with the breeze.

"This is fairy land," cried the children, as the scene burst upon them. But they did not stand long gazing. With childlike curiosity they plunged into the nearest walk, and found it lined with so many new and wonderful flowers, that they could only wander on in speechless admiration.

Presently they turned an angle in the avenue, and there before them, bending over a bed of earth freshly turned, was a queer little old lady, not half so large as the smallest of them. She did not seem in the least surprised to see them, but turning her head over her shoulder, gave them a pleasant little nod, and kept on poking holes in the earth with her fingers, and dropping in seeds.

The children clustered about her, and one little fellow rather less bashful than the rest, said, "I thought fairies could make things grow right up." "So they can," replied the fairy, "but they prefer to have them grow slowly, so that they can have the pleasure of watching them day by day." "I should like to see a tree grow up in a minute, right here by me," said the boy.

Without a word, the fairy took a seed from a little box which hung at her girdle, and muttering something which the children did not hear, threw it upon the earth in front of the boy, and ground it in with

her heel. Instantly up came a green shoot, and as quickly as you could raise your umbrella, there stood a tree before them. But the boy was so anxious to see it all, and stood so close to the spot where the tree came up, that one of the branches as it sh out from the trunk like a spear, was thrust right through his jacket, and before he had time to draw back, lifted him off his feet.

So when the children looked up among the boughs of the magic-tree, there hung their companion, dangling by his coat-skirts like an over-ripe apple just ready to drop. The fairy laughed heartily and tapped the tree with her cane, when it withered away and sank into the ground, as quickly as it had risen. "There isn't much fun in that," said she, "here is something much more interesting," and she directed their attention to a large flower-bed, through which a multitude of small green heads were slowly pushing. "What are all these?" asked they. "Oh, a variety of things," replied she, "just as different as the things sprouting in your heads."

What did the fairy mean? The children stared at each other, and took off their hats, and then declared that they saw nothing but hair sprouting from their heads. So the fairy explained to them of course that very many thoughts and desires, she hoped only good ones, were taking root in their minds, and growing up like plants.

While she was talking, she heard a little rustling of paper, and looking behind her discovered this same boy, who had first addressed her, nothing daunted by his voyage in the air, investigating her box of seeds. He had been tasting of one and another, and had evidently found at length something good, for as the fairy looked about he was just swallowing one huge mouthful, and before she could get at him his cheeks were distended with another handful. "What are you doing," cried she. "Spit it out instantly, it is seed which will make you grow into a thistle."

But it was too late. The mischief was done; while the children looked at him, his hair all rose up straight and turned a reddish purple. His jacket collar turned up and grew over his face and ears like a great green muffler, making his head an enormous thistle bud. From his arms, his legs and his body started forth long slender leaves covered with a multitude of sharp needle points. He could no longer walk. He could only plant his legs as far apart as possible and hold his arms out straight in the air to avoid striking the points into his body. But he could not keep perfectly still, and beside, the wind would blow the leaves against him, so that a succession of muffled squeals came from the mouth hidden in the bud; and now and then words which, as near as they could make out, seemed to be an earnest appeal to some one to take a knife and trim his legs.

But the fairy thought this a good opportunity to teach the children a lesson. So she said, "That is the way with a great many of you mortals. You only think of the taste of things. Your souls and your bodies require food, but so you find something which tickles your palate or affords you amusement, that is all you care for. You have often to learn like this boy by bitter experience that what tastes good for the time being, may be the seed of something which will make you very uncomfortable. Why can you not always remember to see what kind of seed you are eating, as well as what is pleasant to the taste."

Much more she wanted to say, and doubtless would have said, but the boy-thistle was rapidly going to seed. His hair had turned white and the wind was carrying it away. She feared not only the damage that might be done to her garden, if she allowed such seed to be scattered, but also that the boy would be left entirely bald if she did not hasten to change him back to his proper form. So she tapped him with her cane, and in an instant he was a boy again, with the stain of the thistle seed still about his mouth, and a very sheepish look on his face.

The children all set up a great laugh at him for his greediness, and the poor little fellow's temper had been already so sorely tried by his fright and the stings of the thistle points, that he could not take

the jeers of his companions with a very good grace. His lips were beginning to quiver and his eyes to fill with tears, when the fairy came to his relief. "Since you all laugh at him," she said, "doubtless you are all very much wiser than he. Come then, here is my box! Let us see what choice of my seeds you will make."

Of course no one was in a hurry to accept the challenge. But the fairy encouraged them by telling them that it would do them no harm, for she would change them all back again, and they might learn a useful lesson from it. So one of the larger boys came forward, and said he would try how wise a choice he could make. "Now," said he, "I would like to know how it seems to be very large, a hundred feet high; so I shall look for the seed of a tall tree." All was silence, while he turned over the various packages, marked with letters that he did not understand, and felt of them or peeped in to see what they contained. At length he turned up something about the size of his two fists. "That is a large seed, said he, "something huge must come from it." The fairy, of course, did not say a word, so after smelling it, and biting out a trifle to find that it had no particular taste, he proceeded to eat it up.

Very soon he began to change, but instead of growing tall he became shorter. He shrivelled away, till his legs were no thicker than one's thumb,

and he was not half his usual height. From all over his body sprouted green leaves till he was completely enveloped in a cloud of foliage. But the most surprising change was to be noticed in his feet. They took firm root so that he could not lift them. His toes began to swell, and bursting through his shoes grew and burrowed into the ground, like so many enormous sweet potatoes.

In fact, that is just what he became in a few moments; a very good sized potato bush. Nothing more. It was so funny a sight, especially as the children remembered how he had wanted to grow into something very great and grand, that they burst into shouts of laughter.

"There's another mistake which you mortals are always making," said the fairy. "You think large things must grow from large seed. Little opportunities, little habits of thought you overlook because you want to be something great, and you stuff yourselves with some great potato, under the delusion that it will produce a great tree. Here now," said she, taking a tiny black speck in her hand, "is the seed of the largest tree in all my garden."

So the boy was brought back to his own shape, and as he was very good-natured over his mistake, and laughed as heartily as any about his toes growing into potatoes, all the rest were quite ready to try the experiment. One who wished to become some kind

of beautiful flower, chose what proved to be cucumber seed, and falling down upon his face, every bone in his body began to stretch out long and thin like warm molasses candy. His fingers tapered off into small green threads and curled up like little spiral springs. His neck spun out and out till the children wondered how it could hold together, and all the flowers he bore were made by his ears which expanded into two broad yellow blossoms.

But not to spin my story out to the same extent, they all made their choice of seeds in turn. Some succeeded in becoming what they wanted to be and others failed. But all of them learned that it was wiser to know beforehand what kind of seed they were taking, than to depend upon its taste or appearance.

When they went home and told their parents all these wonderful things, their parents told them they had fallen asleep and dreamed them. Perhaps they had, for it is certain that they were never able afterwards to find the place in which they had seen the fairy. But whether it was a dream or a real experience, the children never forgot its lesson. When they found themselves doing something which didn't seem exactly right, though it *was* fun, they stopped and thought, "I wonder if I am not eating thistle-seed." When they were tempted to make light of little matters of speech or deportment, or thought

they would some day find a great opportunity to be good, so that it didn't matter about the little chances; they said to themselves, "Now I am looking for a potato, and if I am ever to be great and good, very likely some little thing is the seed."

That is precisely what I want to teach you. First that you must think not only of what is pleasant to your taste, but what will bear fruit in your lives in after years; and next that the noblest characters often grow from the very smallest seeds. You could not all of you tell cucumber from flower seeds, I dare say. Neither can you always tell what will make your after-lives beautiful or ugly. You should be willing to depend upon the knowledge of older people, who have found out by their own experience what it is good for you to plant in your minds.

Perhaps some of you wonder why you should go to Sunday-school; you do not see much use in it sometimes. It is because there your teachers are trying to drop into your souls some little seeds of goodness and truth, which will slowly grow and grow, until they fill your whole lives in years to come. It is because they hope thus to make your lives happier; to keep out of them many thorns and thistles, and to help them not only to blossom into beauty, but to bear fruit which shall be gathered in heaven, long after your lives on earth have closed.

VII.

THE HEAVENLY VISION.

I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.—*Acts*, xxvi., 19.

THIS verse of Scripture has always been very dear to me, and I have selected it as an introduction to something I want to say to you, hoping that it may help some of you, as it has helped me.

It is a saying of the Apostle Paul's, and this is how it came to be spoken: Paul had been accused by the Jews of doing many things contrary to the law, and was making his defense before the King. He told him that at first, after Jesus' death, he had persecuted the Christians. That is, he had them whipped and imprisoned and stoned, believing that he did God service in putting them out of the world.

But one day, going to Damascus, Jesus suddenly appeared to him in a vision, and not only commanded him to leave off his persecutions of the Christians, but to go out among the surrounding nations and preach his Gospel. "And," says Paul, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."

You do not need to be told that in all human probability we should have known nothing about Christ to-day, had it not been for Paul. He it was who

planted the churches outside of Judea, which lived after Jerusalem had been destroyed and the Jews scattered, and he did this because of a vision.

If Paul had been disobedient, of course we do not know all the difference it would have made. But we do know that instead of being the greatest and most famous man, save one, in all our history, he would have been forgotten, along with many other Jewish teachers of his day. This vision was not merely important to the world and the cause of religion; it was a great event to Paul himself, for it was the turning point in his whole life.

Travellers have found in the far West, upon the mountains beyond the great Plains, a little spring just upon the ridge of what is called the watershed, between two great valleys. It is so situated that any one with a spade could alter the channel in a few minutes, and make it run down either slope at pleasure. Suppose you were to stand beside that spring, and find its waters running toward the west. You would know that they would at length find their way through mountain torrents and deep ravines into the river Colorado, and thence into the Pacific Ocean.

But suppose you were to dig for it a new channel for a few steps, and set its current towards the East; how entirely you would change its destiny, for then it would mingle its waters with the noble streams

which cross the wide prairies, until it met the great Father of Rivers — the Mississippi himself — and by him would be carried out into the broad Atlantic.

Now, just as there is a point in that little stream, when it can be turned in one direction or the other and sent toward either of two oceans which are thousands of miles apart, so, when Paul saw this vision, it was the turning point in his life. Afterwards he lived in a different way, among different people, and all he did was in exactly the opposite direction to what he had done before.

Now, I would like you children to consider two things. The first is, that in every life, and especially in every young life, there are just such turning points.

To be sure, they are not often so all-important as they were in this case; but, on the other hand, there are more of them. There are many times when what you do turns the direction of your lives in some degree, toward the good or the bad; but never afterwards will anything be likely to make so great a change as now in your youth. You can see readily enough that when the slender rivulet had grown to be a great river, it would be a giant work to make for it a new channel.

At the beginning is always the time to decide the direction. Says the old proverb, "As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined."

The second thought I ask you to consider is that a vision may decide your destiny, as really as it did that of Saint Paul. "A vision!" I think some of you will exclaim, "How is that?" We see no visions, except when we sleep, and then we call them dreams. Surely, you do not mean that what we dream is of much importance?" But I do mean to say that dreams of one kind and another have a great influence over your lives. Not alone the dreams that come to you in your sleep, though I may have something to say about them; but I mean, in a general way, the visions in which your mind sees things not seen by your bodily eye. Do you never have day-dreams? I know you do, all of you, for I have seen young children stand long moments with deep, wondering eyes, seeing and hearing nothing going on about them, but looking away and away, they only knew where or what they saw.

Let me tell you what you sometimes see in such visions. You look through years of the future, and see yourselves grown to manhood and womanhood. You are surrounded by loving friends, whom it is your delight to make happy. You have grown noble and powerful, so that your praises are upon many lips, and many hearts are thanking you for the help you have given. You are helping the world to put away all that is hateful and sinful and unlovely. You have surrounded yourselves with things of

beauty in beautiful homes, and all your lives are passed in an atmosphere of love and happiness.

This is a heavenly vision which comes to all children, and it is a great thing if you are never disobedient; for you soon discover that it is not easy to be so good as you have dreamed of being. When you try to help people they will sometimes give you curses instead of blessings. And, just as Paul was obliged to suffer from the false and evil accusations of his enemies, so there are many things that you will have to suffer if you are obedient to your vision.

Many a man and many a woman will try for a little while, and then give up. They come to think that their childish dream of being so good and useful was all folly, and afterward they only selfishly take care of themselves, not caring how their neighbor fares, and are only just so good as it is convenient to be. But, let me tell you, that will be a sorry day on which you shall thus disobey the heavenly vision. When your childish faith and hopefulness go out of your lives, that moment all the joy which marks your childhood's years dies out of your hearts. Whatever it costs of labor and sacrifice, you ought always to follow this dream of something happier and better than you have yet known.

This is the way in which the text has helped me. When it has seemed that it was not worth while to try any longer to be what I should like to be, these

words have come to me, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision;" and the thought of what Paul endured for the sake of his vision, has made me ashamed that I so soon thought of deserting mine.

I have no doubt that sometimes when you fall into a reverie or day-dream, and see so many things in the far future, if some one were to ask you what you were doing, you would reply, "Only thinking." But if you once realize that the voice which speaks to you in such visions is the voice of God calling you to a better life, you will no longer say *only* thinking, and will know that such kind of thought makes a new channel for your lives, leading more directly to the Kingdom of God.

You know that the ancients gave great importance to the dreams which came to them in sleep. The Old Testament contains many wonderful stories of people who were warned in dreams of the future, and how to meet it. There was Pharaoh's dream, which Joseph interpreted, foretelling the famine which afterward came.

There was the strange dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, which he could not remember, and was afterward revealed to Daniel in a dream, together with its interpretation. And there are scores of others, equally wonderful and curious.

Many times a dream will make an impression that you will carry for days and days. Indeed, I know

that I have had dreams which I shall never forget, however long I may live.

There is one remarkable thing about a dream, which sometimes makes it of great importance. When we actually do wrong to another, straightway we begin to try to make it appear to ourselves that we hadn't done wrong at all.

Suppose one of you children gets provoked and strikes a playmate. What do you say? Why, you say: "I don't care—she needn't have taken my doll;" or, "If he didn't want to get hurt, what did he break my hoop for?" And not alone you, little ones, but also many older people, as soon as their conscience begins to accuse them, seek to put all the blame upon some one else. Now, in a dream you do not do this so much, and I believe not at all; when you dream of doing wrong you are always very sorry for it, and so, sometimes in your sleep, you see what is right and what is wrong more clearly than you do in your waking moments.

Let me tell you a short story to show you what I mean. There was once a little girl who was not by any means generally naughty, but who had peevish moods, when it seemed to her that everybody and everything tried to torment her. If she wanted very much to do something, her mamma was sure to say that she must not; and all her toys would lose or break themselves, or behave in some terribly aggra-

vating way. Of course, the fact was, she herself was hateful, and so she thought all the world must be so.

Well, in one of these moods, she decided that she would go out for a walk; and, sure enough, mamma said she must stay in the house. It was a damp, unwholesome day, when she would run a great risk of making herself sick, and this her mother tried to tell her. But she knew it was only that her mother took delight in making her cry, and so she said some very saucy and hasty words, and threw herself upon the sofa, to have a real, good, satisfactory cry.

She sobbed and sobbed, waiting for mamma to come and make it up; but mamma, with a very grave face, kept steadily on with her sewing.

So the little girl grew angrier, and cried harder than ever, till at length she cried herself to sleep. At first she seemed to be in a great dark wood, and the wind roaring through the branches overhead, filled her with dread. She was all alone, and searched in vain for some path to lead her into the light. So, crying out for help, she went stumbling up and down for days and days together, until finally a great root tripped her and she fell.

She was not hurt, but angry, and as soon as she had risen, picked up a long stick and beat the tree as long as she was able. Suddenly all the wood vanished, and as she looked up she saw that instead of

the tree, she was beating her mother, who looked down upon her with sad, reproachful eyes. Instantly she sank at her mother's feet to implore forgiveness, when once more she was alone — alone in the midst of a great plain. As far as eye could reach not a living thing could be seen; not a single bird was in the heavens, not a blade of grass above the ground. No breath of air was stirring, and all was dead silence, save a faint moan, which seemed to rise out of the earth, ever and ever so far away.

Slowly and sadly she wandered on in the direction whence this sound proceeded, until all at once she found herself on the brink of a rapid river, whose inky waters leaped and roared far beneath her.

"What river is this?" asked the child, with a vague notion that she had never heard of it in her geography. The words were no sooner out of her mouth than a great shriek rang out, and "Remorse, Remorse, Remorse!" went echoing away back into the ravine from which the river came.

And now wherever she looked she could only see her mother's sad, reproachful eyes. They looked down upon her from the clouds, which were growing heavier; they were being carried quickly past by every wave below. Wherever she turned her gaze, those eyes, full of grief, looked back at her.

"Oh! what shall I do, what shall I do?" she cried, and then the earth began sinking under her

feet. Down, down, down, she fell. It seemed to be a great slide of the bank, off into the black waters, and scrambling for a foothold amongst the rolling stones, bruised and bleeding and crying for help, down she went, the sad eyes still following her.

She heard the splash of the water as the great rocks before her leaped in; but, just as she herself was sinking into their chill embrace, there stood mamma upon the brink with arms stretched out to save her.

With a cry of mingled joy and terror, the child sprang forward, and found herself close clasped in her mother's arms. "What has my darling been dreaming that she cries out so in her sleep?" said a soft, soothing voice. But for a long time she could only sob out a prayer for forgiveness for the ugly words she had spoken before she went to sleep.

She had had her vision, and she never forgot it. The memory of those eyes she had seen in her dream never left her, and whenever she afterward felt tempted to say anything wrong, the vision all came back to her, and her anger was melted in an instant.

I cannot pretend that through all my boyhood years I was as truthful as George Washington is said to have been, for, although I have no very distinct remembrance about it, I dare say that I might have told a few moderate falsehoods. But of

this I am sure, that I should have told a great many more except for a dream I once had. I dreamed of throwing my ball through a large glass window, and that, when the owner of the house came out and asked me if I did it, I said "No." Then I thought he pounced upon a playmate, of whom I was very fond, saying, "It must be you, then," and dragging him in, gave him a sound whipping.

No words can express how mean and degraded I felt, in my dream, as I heard that boy's cries. Had I been awake I should likely enough have said, "Well, he need not have been standing around there, if he didn't want to be whipped." But not so in my sleep. I felt as if I was the meanest, most cowardly wretch on the face of the earth, and I had not a single word to say in my own defense. I never should be able to make you understand how I loathed and abhorred myself — how ashamed I was of my own presence — unless you have had such a dream yourselves.

After I awoke it was a long while before I could shake off the impression that I had actually done something terribly mean. The dream gave me such an instinctive hatred and horror of all lies, as I do not believe I could have been made to feel in any other way.

But I do not want you to think that these are the only heavenly visions to which you ought to be

obedient. The vision is something that tells you what is right and what is wrong, and oftentimes only speaks very clearly in a dream, because then you do not seem to care to defend yourself against your conscience. If some one had tried to convince Paul that he ought not to persecute the Christians, he would have found plenty of reasons why he should. But when Jesus appeared to him in the vision, and said, "Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me?" Paul had not a word to say. But, wherever you may be, and however occupied, when it flashes upon you what you ought to do, that is your heavenly vision; and better that you had never been born than that you should not obey it.

I remember to have read or heard or imagined the story of a boy who once tried to whip a favorite dog. He had struck him many times before in a passion, and never thought it any worse than to strike a rock. But this time something in the dog's cry, or in the piteous look of his eye, made him feel how cruel he was. So suddenly it came upon him that it caught him with his hand raised, in the act of striking. It seemed to be a power holding him back — as of old, the angels caught Abraham's hand when he was about to kill his son. Indeed, I think that is precisely what the old story about Abraham and Isaac means.

He was just ready to slay Isaac, according to an

old heathen custom, that he might offer up his body as a burnt offering. But even as he had the knife poised in air, suddenly he saw what a hideous act it was; and his arm was stayed, as by an angel from heaven.

Such heavenly visions come to us all, when a great light bursts upon us, and our duty is made plain. You have all, perhaps, on some summer evening, watched the coming up of a thunder storm. You will see only a great indistinct mass of heavy clouds rolling up the sky and casting a deep shadow over all the landscape. Then will come a dazzling flash of lightning. For an instant everything will appear in a great glare of light. The distant hills, the trees and houses near you, will be as plainly seen as at noonday, and into the surface of the cloud will be stamped a long zigzag line of flame. So, where all is dark and uncertain, there sometimes bursts upon us a clear picture of the right. And it will be the greatest of all things for you children, if in after years you can look back upon such an experience, and say, like Paul, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."

VIII.

MODESTY.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.— *Matt.* v. 5.

FAR away in the heart of a great wilderness lived a lion, who was acknowledged to be king, by all the beasts in that part of the world. He was very large and strong, and of course if he could master other lions, he had nothing to fear from such animals as wolves and bears.

This lion had a kind of court, as kings do, that is, he gathered about him the strongest and the swiftest of the other animal tribes, and made them hunt for him, or to act as scouts to bring him reports where game could be found. On condition that they did this service for him well, the King promised not to eat them. All other animals in his dominions he would devour, whenever he felt hungry and could catch them.

Of course there was great fear of him among all his subjects, and a great desire to attach themselves to his Court, for those only whom the King would deign to employ, were safe from his hungry jaws. Even these had always to dread that in some outburst of anger he might turn upon them, and so they all sought to please him by flattery.

Partly because those about him were always telling him what a powerful and magnificent animal he was, and partly because he was naturally rather vain, the lion became a great boaster, and thought that as he never had been, he never could be beaten in fight.

One day the Court was all assembled about the King, who, having just finished a hearty dinner, was very good-natured; though now and then he could not forbear lashing with his great tail the little monkeys who acted as his pages, just for the fun of hearing them cry with pain. Every little while he would walk majestically back and forth before his courtiers, giving one of his loud roars, at which they all fell trembling with fright, and this pleased him very much. Still, he was, for him, very good-natured, and the Court was enjoying quite a comfortable afternoon, when suddenly there was a loud trampling and crackling among the bushes, and while all were looking to see what caused it, the great head of an elephant was pushed through the thicket.

Its astonished owner stopped upon finding himself an intruder, and would have retired, only he was curious to know what the scene meant. It chanced that this was the first elephant that had ever entered the lion king's dominions; so neither he nor his courtiers knew what kind of animal this great black head and long swinging nose belonged to.

All the smaller animals were thrown into great terror by its sudden appearance, and crouched trembling behind their King. And he, if the truth were known, felt his knees shake a little — with anger as he afterwards said — but really in fear. But he knew that he must not show any weakness, so he put on a bold face, and demanded of the elephant how he dared to enter his presence without leave, and what reason he could give why he should not be killed and eaten on the spot.

At this all the animals set up a great howl, which was meant for applause of their King, and made the elephant open his eyes to their widest extent. When he had a little recovered from his astonishment, he answered courteously enough, that he came from a distant part of the country, and had never heard of his Majesty. He had strayed from the herd to which he belonged, and was wandering about aimlessly, when he chanced to stumble upon their place of meeting. Being innocent of any wrong intent, he hoped the King would do him no harm, but permit him to withdraw.

Finding him thus peaceably disposed, all the animals at once regained their courage, and began to clamor for the King to put him to death instantly. But the King suspected that this might not be so easy, and feeling some curiosity moreover to look at the elephant, he professed himself satisfied with the

answer, and invited him to come forward, assuring him at the same time in a very patronizing way, that none of his subjects should hurt him. So the elephant stepped out from the bushes, and again made a little panic of fright among the beasts, as his tremendous size was disclosed to view.

However, his quiet and gentle manner at once reassured them, and they soon began to laugh at his clumsiness, and to play tricks with him. The monkeys began to climb his trunk, and when he shook them off because their claws pierced his thick skin, they declared that they had mistaken it for the stump of a dead tree. The squirrels burrowed into his huge ears, saying that they supposed them to be hollows in trees, and thought that they should find stores of hickory nuts laid up there. The foxes bit his heels, just to see, they said, whether they were really made of wood.

The elephant took all this in a very good-natured way, so that instead of fearing him they all began to despise him, the Lion most of all. "Still, one might make such a stupid brute useful," thought the King. "I might train him to bring home the game after I have killed it, and thus save myself many a weary tug." But he never thought of asking the elephant whether he would like to engage in his service. He simply informed him in a lordly way that he would be permitted to remain at Court, and would not be harmed so long as he did what was required of him.

Now the elephant cared nothing for threats. He was not afraid, but at the same time he liked to live in peace. He knew well enough that he had tremendous strength, but he never boasted of it, and never needed it except to defend himself. So he cared nothing for the Lion's bragging, and as there was plenty of food for him in the neighborhood, he thought he might as well spend a little time in "society."

He remained some days at Court, and because he did not roar and rave about like the Lion, all the beasts became confirmed in the opinion that he was a great coward, who wouldn't dare to fight a mouse.

At last one day the King went a-hunting, and all the court went with him. He succeeded in killing a fine large buck, which he ordered the elephant to carry home. With his usual good nature the elephant wound his trunk about the body of the deer, swung it upon his back and trudged along.

Now while they were yet at some distance from home, the elephant, feeling hungry, stopped to browse on the lower limbs of a tree under which he chanced to pass. The Lion, being also hungry, ordered him to come along and not keep his betters waiting for their dinners. The elephant replied that he only wanted a few mouthfuls, and would come along directly; whereupon the King flew into a great rage and declared that he would kill him then and there.

So he walked up to him foaming at the mouth and lashing his tail. But the elephant was ready for him. Just as he saw the Lion crouching to spring at his throat, quick as thought he wrapped the long trunk about him, picked him up from the ground, and giving him a swing tossed him some distance away unhurt.

Here was a pickle for a Lion and a King to be in, with all his court looking on to see him beaten. He did not much relish the idea of trying it again, but he knew that he would be King no longer if he acknowledged himself vanquished.

The elephant also knew that he could have no more peace with the Lion; for if the latter found he could not kill him in open battle, he would some time spring upon him in his sleep. So he determined to finish the King then and there. As he advanced once more the elephant was ready. Catching him again with his trunk, he lifted him high up in the air and dashed him violently upon the ground, with so much force as to break half the bones in his body. The Lion had just life enough left to crawl away, and what became of him none of his Court ever knew. He was never heard of again in that country.

The beasts were all very glad to be relieved from fear of him, and made the elephant King in his place.

This story illustrates my first point, which is, that

they who possess the highest strength and courage are modest or meek. The braggart is always at heart something of a coward, and is never so much of a person as he gives himself out to be. I think you will never find the maxim fail, that people who are really powerful like the elephant, in respect of mind or body, are also modest people who never boast of their strength, and do not show it upon all occasions, but who nevertheless know well enough how to use it when the time comes.

People who think they know more or are stronger in any way, than all the rest of the world put together, are pretty sure to find, like the Lion, some one or something that can take the conceit out of them.

Now I know that children are pretty sharp and clear-sighted, so I need not tell you that I have not yet shown the verse at the beginning of my story to be true. Suppose that all strong people are meek, that is not saying that all meek people are strong. You might say that everybody's head is round, but that would not be saying that every round thing is a head, for there are apples and pumpkins, and many things that are round as well as heads.

So now having shown you that great strength is modest, I must try to show you that in modesty is strength. Or as the text says, The meek shall inherit the earth. And this will be the second point I shall try to illustrate.

A spider once in the spring-time made a very large and beautiful web across a little cleft in some rocks, calculating that it would supply him with food all summer long. Just after it was finished there blew into it a little thistle seed, which, having some of its last year's down still upon it, was caught and held fast. Out came the spider, thinking he had caught a fly, and when he found only a thistle-seed, he was very angry.

The seed said to the spider, "I am only a little mite of a thing, please carry me out into the sunlight, where I shall find more room to grow." But the spider replied that he should have trouble enough to mend his web, and would do nothing but drop the seed into the little dark hole underneath.

Very soon a little pale green head began to peer up from this dark corner toward the light. One day the spider caught sight of it. "Hullo!" said he to himself, "so that ugly little seed has begun to grow!" "I say," he called out, "what do you expect to come to, down there. If I were such a sickly-looking thing as you, I would give up and die." "To be sure," replied the young thistle, "I am yet small and weak, and not very healthy here in the dark. But I get a little sun, sometimes, and with his light to help me I hope by and by, to get out into open day." "Pooh!" said the spider. "It is precious little notice that the sun will take of you, I think. And besides, don't

you see that I have spun my web directly over you? You can't get out through that." The thistle only replied that it would do the best it could.

Day by day it kept growing, and as the spider saw how large it was, he began to strengthen his web. He spun it so fine and it looked so solid, that the poor thistle sometimes gave itself up for lost, and thought it should never get out to daylight. Then the spider was so confident, and laughed so loudly at what he called the pretensions of the thistle, that its courage grew less and less every day. But it kept on growing, and after a time its head pushed up against the centre of the web and began to lift it. Then the spider became alarmed. He ran hither and thither, strengthening his little silken ropes. But of course it was of no use. The thistle was now up where the sun shone upon it and it grew very fast. So in a week more, nothing was left of the web but a few tatters flying in the wind, and the spider had all his work to do over again.

The thistle was strongest, because it meekly relied upon the help of the sun, while the spider vainly trusted in the strength of the little threads he had spun out of himself.

So there is a sun from which our souls derive help. If we are vain and proud like the spider, we shall trust wholly in what we can do of ourselves. If we are meek in disposition, we shall ask God, the sun of

our lives, to help us; and when his strength comes into our hearts, we shall make short work with all the cobwebs.

Now let me try to put the same truth into a little story rather more like real life. There were once two boys who set out together to seek their fortunes, and first they decided to go to sea. So they walked to the city, and found a ship just about to sail. They found her captain, and asked him if he would take them. The captain inquired what they knew about a ship. One of them, named Tom, said at once, "Oh! a great deal." The other, named Joe, said, "Not much," but he would try to learn. "Can you furl the yard-arm?" asked the captain. Now of course, no one can do that, any more than he can fold up a board, and the captain only asked this to catch them. Neither knew what it meant, but Joe said at once that he could not. Tom said, "Oh, yes," he knew all about furling the yard-arm. "Very well," said the captain, "you may do that for me, and Joe may coil up this rope. If you do your tasks well, I will employ you."

Tom immediately began running about among the sailors, asking them where he could find the yard-arm, and how he should furl it. Some simply laughed at him, others sent him to various parts of the ship above and below decks. At length one fellow told him that to furl the yard-arm, a man had to

be pulled up into the rigging by a rope made fast to his heels, and untie certain knots in the shrouds. So the man tied a rope to Tom and pulled him up a little way from the deck, where he left him hanging by his heels, to the great amusement of the sailors.

Meantime, Joe looked about him and saw one of the men coiling a rope, and after watching him a moment, he knew how to do the task the captain had set for him, and did it so carefully and neatly that when the captain came out from the cabin, he told Joe that he had done very well, and as he was short of hands, at once engaged him for the voyage.

Tom, too, was so humble when brought down to the deck again, that the captain was prevailed upon to take him also. So they sailed away from port, and after they had recovered from their first sea-sickness, set about learning to be sailors. Tom always thought he could do everything, was always thrusting himself forward, and consequently got into a great many bad scrapes, without learning much after all. Joe kept his eyes open, but never boasted, and only did what he was asked to do, as well as he was able. The consequence was that he learned very fast, and soon became a handy sailor.

The ship, after being out some weeks, encountered a very heavy storm, and the men were forced to work night and day till they were nearly worn out. But at length the storm subsided, and they ran into a very

thick fog so that a sharp lookout had to be kept up every moment to guard against running into other vessels. Now Tom had thought it would be a very fine thing to be stationed up aloft, and cry out, "Sail on the starboard bow!" as the lookout did. So the day after the storm he besought the officer on duty to let him go up and take the lookout's place for an hour or two, in order that he might get some rest. The officer knew that the lookout man was very much exhausted, as all the men were, and after questioning Tom to make sure that he knew starboard from port, he consented, but cautioned him to keep his eyes open.

So Tom went aloft and relieved the lookout, and felt very grand at taking this responsible place. For a little while he looked very eagerly, but nothing came in sight, and the fog was so thick that he could only see a little way ahead. The officer frequently called to him, to make sure he was doing his duty, and he replied so promptly that the officer's fears were quieted.

But Tom found it rather chilly work, and it occurred to him that if he could lash himself to the mast, he could put his hands in his pockets and keep them warm. So he took the end of one of the ropes used in furling the sails, and proceeded to tie his body firmly to the mast. But there were several knots to be untied first, and, as this took some little time, Tom forgot all about keeping the lookout.

At length, just as he had finished, he glanced up and saw a great ship close upon them on his port or left-hand side. It was well that he was tied to the mast, or in his sudden fright he would have fallen. His brain grew confused, and he shouted, "Sail close on the starboard," which means *right.* Now, the two ships would have passed each other if they had both kept straight on. But the man at the helm hearing Tom's cry, instantly put his helm so as to turn his ship toward the left, and, owing to Tom's mistake, ran her directly into the side of the other vessel.

There was a great crash; captain and men came running on deck, axes were brought, and after a time the ships were cut loose from each other. Then it was seen that the stranger's side was completely crushed in, and hardly had they got away from her when she filled and sank. Her crew, all who had not climbed into the other ship through the rigging, while they were fast locked together, jumped into the water, and the captain of Tom's ship instantly ordered the boats to be lowered. But before he could be obeyed a boat shot out from under the vessel's stern, in which Joe was rowing with all his might.

When he came on deck, after the collision, he saw he could be of no use forward, so he quietly went aft and managed somehow to lower one of the boats, to be ready for an emergency. So, just as soon as he saw the men in the water, he pulled away, and before

another boat could be lowered he had picked them all up. So Joe figured as the hero of the occasion; while, after the helmsman told his story, poor Tom got nothing but a scolding.

I am sure it will not surprise you to be told that Tom never found his fortune as a sailor, and that Joe became in after years captain of many ships, and won his way to the confidence and respect of all who had to do with him.

What I want you to see is this: that one boy failed because he thought he knew everything, and was always thrusting himself forward into places which he could not fill; and that the other succeeded because he modestly waited till he should be called upon, and undertook nothing which he was not sure of accomplishing. This, to be sure, is not all that Jesus meant by the word meekness, but it is part of it, and that part which I think children have most need to learn.

You must learn by hard experience, if you will not learn without, that you are very far from knowing everything, and from being able to do everything that you would like to do. When you learn this, you are meek, as Christ means us to be.

You will sometimes hear it said that the great secret of success is what is called, in slang phrase, "cheek." If one only has "cheek" enough, some people think, he will get on in the world well enough.

Don't believe a word of such nonsense — not a word! People must have courage and resolution, but the self-conceited man is almost sure to come to failure in the end.

You must learn, first of all, to look up to God; feeling that you have great need of His help, and that without His blessing you can do nothing.

You must learn in the next place that you have need of the counsel and advice of all that are older and wiser than you. You must not allow yourselves to think, "Oh, yes; I know all about it. I can do everything that I want to do." You must know that the duties of life are very serious things, and not to be done easily.

If you see a boy who says to himself, "Oh, that's nothing — I can do that perfectly;" you may be pretty sure that he will make a blunder before he gets through. If he has the feeling, "I'll do the best I can," he is much more likely to get through successfully. This, I suppose, is what Christ meant by saying that the meek shall inherit the earth. They who modestly try to do what they can, will succeed better than those who think they can do everything.

IX.

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.—*Matt.* xiii. 45, 46.

YOU do not know, dear children — nor can you know, till in older years you look back upon your childhood — how much you have to be grateful for, which other people when they were children did not enjoy. A few hundred years ago, as you will learn from your histories, the only schooling children could get was what they could remember of the lectures of monks.

There were no books for them, and most of them had never been taught to read or write, when these monks or schoolmen began to lecture. But hundreds of them in England begged their way to the towns, and there got all their living by begging, in order that they might hear what these monks could tell.

Since that day the schools have grown better and better; but even now you will hear many fathers say, "Oh, if I only could have had the benefit of such schools as my boys and girls attend."

People's ideas about a church, what it can do for them and their children, and what it means to join a church, have all changed a great deal.

I am not going to trouble you about this change further than as it applies to you children. Suppose, on a bright summer's day, you were to enter a great empty church, with windows all closed and shades down; a damp, mouldy smell in the air, which would send the shivers all over you; heavy, gloomy shadows on all its walls, and the hollow echoes sounding away up in the dim roof whenever you ventured to speak. Should you not say, "Oh, dear! let us hurry out into the open air, where we can see the sun and hear the birds?" Well, that is something like the feeling children used to have about church.

Now, suppose on some dreary November day you were forced to take a little journey, say a walk home from school through a cold rain and colder wind. Suppose, all wet through to your skin, and feeling as if your back bone were one great icicle, tired, hungry and discouraged, you should reach your home, and, just before mounting the steps, should catch a glimpse, through the window, of the bright fire and the happy faces gathered about it. How beautiful it would look to you, and how glad you would be to get home!

That is the way we should like to make children feel about the church. We want to get all the brightness and good cheer into it that we can, and shut outside all the darkness and cold. When you think of religion, we want you to think of something

which will make you a great deal happier in life than you can be without it.

In one of his shorter parables, Jesus says: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it." That means that one's religion should be more beautiful and precious than anything else on earth. That is just the thought I wish to impress upon you, and of course I must try to tell you *how* it can be worth so much, and why it has so much beauty. I think I can do that rather better by a story than in any other way.

There was once a boy who went out into the world to seek his fortune. Of course, all you who have read the story-books know that boys once did that a great deal, though now-a-days they do not go away till they know where they are going. But all the books tell about bright little fellows who, without even a penny of spending-money, and with no idea of going to any particular place, went out to seek their fortunes. So this boy, who shall be called Edwin, set off one bright morning, without telling even his mother what was in his mind, and resolved not to come back again till he should be rich and famous.

As he went along all the birds asked of him, "Where are you going, little boy, with such a bright

look on your face?" and Edwin answered, "I am going to seek my fortune." "And what fortune do you seek?" asked they again. "Riches and fame," replied the boy.

Then the birds stopped singing, and looked after him curiously till he was out of sight. As he trudged on through the forest, the deer started from his path; but, seeing that he did not notice them, they stopped to ask, "Where are you going, little boy, with such a far-away look in your eyes?" and Edwin answered as before. Then the deer shook their heads, as if they did not know what to make of it, and watched him until he was out of sight.

He came to a river, wide and deep, but he rushed in and nearly drowned himself before he could scramble back to the shore. There was a horse grazing upon the bank, who said to him, "Where are you going, little boy, that you are in such great haste?" "To seek my fortune," Edwin replied. The horse could make nothing out of it, but he offered to carry him across the river. So Edwin climbed upon his back, and was taken safely over. But he was in such haste that he hardly paused to thank the horse, who stood long on the bank, watching him till he had gone out of sight.

At last the boy met a man on horseback, who asked, "Who are you, my boy, that you so boldly

enter the dominions of our sovereign lord, the king?" "I am going to seek my fortune," said Edwin, and passed on. The horseman wheeled about and looked after him a little; then, putting spurs to his horse, soon overtook him. "You are a plucky little fellow," said he, "but you can't get much farther at that pace. Climb up behind me, and I will carry you a league or two on your journey." Edwin gladly accepted the invitation, and was soon seated astride the powerful animal, clinging round the waist of his rider. Then the horse broke at once into a run. The horseman urged him on faster and faster, to try how well the boy behind him could keep his seat. They rushed through dense thickets and under low boughs, which caught Edwin's clothing and even tore his flesh. They leaped great rocks and floundered through bogs. Still the boy held fast to the rider's waist. At length, with a great bound, the horse plunged from a little bluff into the waters of a lake below. Down they sank, all three. But when they came up again, Edwin was still in his place. So, after that, the horseman drew rein a little, and they trotted leisurely along, till they entered a beautiful park, and rode up to the porch of a palace all glittering with gold and jewels. Then said the horseman, as they dismounted, "Since you ride so well, let us see what kind of page you will make;" and Edwin followed him into the palace.

The knight gave him a splendid suit of livery, and, after he himself had dressed, led the way to the great hall. Here, seated about a long table, upon which glittered great heaps of gold and precious gems, sat a king and his courtiers, drinking and gambling. Pages were coming and going, bearing huge flagons of wine, and among these Edwin took his place, as his master seated himself at the table.

Every now and then a fierce quarrel would break forth. Men would take each other by the throat, and for a few moments all would be in an uproar. But then the king would rise, and in an instant the tumult would be stilled. Rapidly the dice rattled, swiftly the piles of gold were changed, and deep and often drank the knights. But the wine soon began to overpower their senses. One after another they fell fast asleep, dice-box in hand, till even the king was snoring loudly. The pages stole away as their masters' heads sank upon their breasts, till Edwin was left alone. Quickly seizing one of the rich rugs, which was spread upon the floor, he tied the corners together in such a way as to make a sack, and threw into it armful after armful of the glittering treasure, till he could just stagger under the load. Then, watching his opportunity, he stole as noiselessly as possible through the long hall and out into the open air.

In the stables were always the fleetest horses

standing ready, saddled and bridled, and Edwin had little difficulty in leading one out and hoisting his load to the saddle-bow. Then off he went at full pace, not caring where, except to get away from the palace. "Hurrah!" said he, "I have found my fortune."

He had not ridden far before shouts of pursuit broke upon his ear. His escape had been discovered and the knights were all after him. But, by good luck, Edwin had taken the best horse; and so, despite his heavy load, long kept in the advance. His pursuers gained upon him, however, and were at his very heels, when a sharp turn in the road brought him to a bridge over the stream which marked the boundary of the king's dominions. His horse carried him across, but at the first bound upon the other side fell dead. Edwin rolled over and over, stunned by the fall.

When he again came to consciousness, no one was to be seen. He ran back eagerly to his dead steed, and there was still his precious bundle hung to the saddle-bow; but when he peeped in, he found that all his rich gold had turned into a heap of filthy dirt.

"Well," said he, "I see that I must seek some better fortune than riches;" and once more he set forth on his pilgrimage. But now, when the birds asked him where he was going, he replied, "I am seeking fame; I will be a great man. All the world

shall hear of me, and every mouth shall be full of my praise." At last, as he went forward, the air began to be full of the shouts of a distant multitude, and very soon he could distinguish names which thousands of voices seemed to be crying out at once. Presently his path led him to the brow of a little hill, and there stretched before him a vast plain, filled as far as his eye could reach with a dense crowd. In the centre rose a stately temple in which a magnificent queen was seated, and on the steps stood heralds with long brass trumpets.

While Edwin looked, he saw a man mount the steps and kneel before the queen, who placed a crown of laurel upon his brow. Then his name was given to the heralds, who shouted it through their trumpets, and it was taken up in thundering tones by all the people. "This," said Edwin, "is the Goddess of Fame, and if I can make my way to her throne, I shall become famous, and *my* name will be shouted by all the people." But how to get there was the question, for this was precisely what every one in the crowd was trying to do, and they were all packed together so closely that though he looked for hours and hours, he could not find the smallest opening.

At last a bright idea came into his mind. A tree stood near him, and its branches extended out over the heads of the crowd. Taking off his boots, he

clambered up to the lowest bough, and creeping out upon it a little way, he found he could almost touch the heads of the people beneath, though they were so busy watching the temple and shouting the names, as one after another the attendant heralds called them out, that no one paid the slightest attention to him.

After taking a good long rest, he swung himself down and planted his foot firmly upon the shoulder of a stout man underneath. The man gave a grunt and tried to get his arms up to take him off. But before he could do this, Edwin made a great leap and came down upon the bald head of a man in front. His foot slipped and he very nearly tore off the poor man's ear, but he couldn't stop to make any apologies. At the next jump he crushed a lady's new spring bonnet. So he went from head to head, sometimes up and sometimes down. He left some bloody noses and tore out a good many handfuls of hair, in trying to clutch something to help himself up again, when he fell. But nobody could free their hands soon enough to catch him as he went over them, and finally, with a bound he cleared the last head and alighted in the open space in front of the temple.

Then he had only to wait his turn, which soon came. For an instant he kneeled before the Goddess; he felt the crown upon his brow; he heard his

name shouted by the multitude, and was supremely happy.

Full of the consciousness of greatness, he descended. But his foot had scarcely touched the earth, when he heard the air ring with a new name, and putting his hand to his forehead he found that his crown had turned to dust. Still he had been made famous, and he walked boldly up to the crowd, commanding them to open and let him pass. To his surprise not one paid the slightest heed to him. "Give way," said he, "I am that Edwin who but just now was crowned." But already they had forgotten his very name. There was but one thing to do; he threw himself upon his hands and knees, and pushed in among the legs of the multitude. He was trampled on, and kicked, and choked with dust; but at length, more dead than alive, he did creep out again.

So now as he went forward on his journey, and when the birds asked him where he was going, he answered sadly, "I am seeking my fortune; can you tell me what it is?" But though he questioned all the birds and the beasts, they could only tell him that they had heard vague stories of a wonderful treasure, beyond a wide forest, if any one was bold enough to go and claim it.

So, footsore and weary, Edwin crept listlessly forward and entered the forest. No longer in eager

haste, but painfully and slowly, without much hope or care, he walked on. And evermore as he went deeper into the forest, the shadows grew darker, the wind moaned more hoarsely among the trees, the clouds overhead grew blacker and began to send out their dazzling flashes of light. But Edwin paid little heed, till the rain came down in torrents; the great trees about him were falling with crash after crash, and the roar of the thunder was incessant. Then half wild with terror, he cried out, "There is no good-fortune anywhere; it is an ugly, wicked, hateful world, and I wish I had never been born."

Just then, beside his path, he heard a sharp cry, and stooping to see whence it came, he saw, by a flash of lightning, the face of a little old woman, upon whom a tree had fallen. It was not a very ugly face to be sure, but it was very different from the face of that beautiful maiden whom Edward had seen in his dreams, and he could not help a little feeling of disgust. But the old woman pleaded earnestly for help. She was not much hurt, she said, but the tree had crushed her into the soft earth and held her prisoner. So Edwin set to work with his hands, and soon dug away the soil so that she could creep out. Then said she, "If you will let me lean upon you, I will help you to find your fortune." "There is no fortune that I care for," said Edwin; but he allowed her to lean upon his arm.

Somehow her touch sent a thrill all through him, and his hope and courage began to revive. She spoke to him in a sweet voice, but he could not again see her face, for the lightning had died away in a distant glimmer, leaving them in almost total darkness. But he loved to hear her speak and to feel her hand upon his arm.

Very soon his ear caught strains of distant music. It swelled and died away with the breeze, and seemed to come from no particular direction, but rather to be all about them, instead of the light; for still Edwin could not see. At last they paused before what appeared, in the dim outline, like a church. The music, rich and full, seemed to make the very earth tremble, and a pure, soft light streamed through the windows. Edwin's heart was all on fire with a hope which he could not explain to himself, as he pushed open the door and entered. Then for the second time, he saw the face of his companion, and now it was more lovely than any thing he had ever seen in his dreams.

"Who are you?" he cried, gazing rapturously upon her. "My name is Goodness," she replied. "Then," said he, "I ask no other fortune, only that you will come back with me to my own country, that I may live in the light of your smile." And the maiden said, "So that you will promise always to love me as you do now, I will go with you anywhere

on the face of the earth." Edwin promised with all his heart, and a quiet voice, coming from some unseen source above him, said, "I have heard your promise, go in peace."

When Edwin and his companion came out again, he thought the air had never been so bright, and that he had never heard the birds sing so sweetly. They walked back through the forest, and found it all full of the most beautiful flowers. They came to the multitude still surging around the temple of Fame, and what was Edwin's surprise to hear the air ringing once more with his own name. The crowd parted before them, and all the people threw flowers before them as they walked up before the Temple. Here the Queen offered them her throne. But Edwin no longer cared for it, and together they passed on, leaving the crowd still shouting Edwin's name.

They came to the place where the dead steed was still lying, and Edwin showed his companion the sack of dirt with which he had tried to escape. But she took a handful and held it for an instant upon her palm, where it once more became gold and diamonds. "It is only dross," said she, "to those who do not use it for good purposes."

Then she went to the horse and raised up his head, and he bounded to his feet, as full of life, and strong as ever. So they mounted and rode away to Edwin's

home, where they lived long together, making every one about them happy, and being themselves the happiest of all glad people that ever lived.

This, children, is the moral of my story: that the world is never a bright or pleasant world to people who are merely rich or famous. Some of the wealthiest kings, and men whose names were the widest known, have been miserably unhappy all their days, because they had no love of goodness in their hearts.

That is why I said at the beginning, that one's religion should be more beautiful and precious than anything on earth beside. It is through religion that we learn to love goodness, and we go to church, because it is only when God pours light upon our eyes that we can see her beautiful face.

IX.

SELF-DEVOTION.

He was wounded for our transgressions; and with his stripes we are healed.— *Isaiah*, liii. 5.

CHRISTMAS time means, especially to children, a time for giving and receiving gifts; for many games and relief from study; for faces full of good cheer and hearts full of good wishes; in brief, for universal happiness and content. But how is it, children, that this world is so full of joy at all times, and fairly bubbles over with delight at this holiday season? What have we done to make life so pleasant, or to deserve that God should make it so pleasant for us?

Suppose that every year you were obliged to *make* all this good time, instead of simply enjoying it. In the autumn you go into the orchard, and behold! the trees bend down to you laden with ripe fruit, which you have only to pluck and eat. Suppose that you were obliged to make your apples and pears before you could eat them. I fear you would not have them in so great plenty, and that what you had would not be so deliciously flavored.

Well, somebody must make the apples. Nature

alone will only grow little sour and shriveled things, which nobody cares to eat. Somebody must plant, and prune and cultivate for many, many years, before you get your juicy pear, or mellow, rosy-cheeked apple.

So somebody must make the good cheer of Christmas time. Somebody must have toiled and suffered a weary while, in order that our hearts to-day might enjoy so much. Who has been that somebody, and what has that somebody done? It would not do to say that any one person has given us everything; for many thousand heads have planned, many thousand fingers have labored to make our holiday enjoyments.

But on Christmas day we celebrate the birth of Christ, and we are led to ask why it is that the gayest season of all the year should be associated with that event. What did he do for us, that we should thus remember his birth? You all believe, doubtless, that Christ was very good and very great, and that it is your duty to try and live like him so far as you can. But I fancy many of you might ask me, whether if Christ had not lived, we could not be just as happy to-day? No, we could not, and that is what I want to show you.

Many years before the first Christmas, an old Jewish Prophet, speaking (as is generally thought) of the Christ who was to come, as though he had already seen him, said this: "He was wounded for

our transgressions, and by his stripes we are healed." And that means that he suffered to save us from suffering; that because he had so many sorrows to endure, we are in great measure freed from sorrow. This kind of labor and suffering is known by a hard name, but you need only remember that it was suffering and labor which Jesus undertook, to save some one else from it.

"By his stripes we are healed." Does that mean that if we feel sick, and can get some one else to take a whipping, that will cure us? Not at all, though the old Jews thought it did. For when they had done wrong, and imagined that God was angry, they took a poor innocent lamb, and killed it, thinking that by its death God would be satisfied.

But the text means this rather. Suppose you were lost in a wood, and had wandered and climbed about till your hands and feet were torn with the sharp rocks; your face scratched and bleeding from your attempts to push your way through the tangled briars; and suppose just as you had sunk down upon the earth, courage and strength gone, all hopes of getting nearer home departed, some one should appear before you, saying, I will show you the way. Suppose then he should go before you, choosing out a smooth path, pushing aside the brambles with his own hands, so that while his clothing was torn, and his body wounded by the thorns, you could follow

behind, safe from their cruel points, until he had led you out once more under the open sky, and put you upon the broad road for home. That would be such suffering as Christ took upon himself for the sake of others.

For men were lost in a wilderness, and though they had struggled long, they could not find the way out into the sunshine of heavenly love and peace, until Christ came to show them the way. He came into the gloomy depths of ignorance and sin, where man had sunk down exhausted, saying, "Rise and follow me." Then he went before, fighting all the temptations, enduring all the griefs which had bewildered the world, until, through them, he had made a plain path to heaven, in which others could follow.

This is the way the world escaped from the wilderness, and found its way to so much of the gladness of heaven. Surely it ought to be happiest of all when the day comes round on which this great soul first appeared upon the earth.

I wish I could show you what a beautiful and sublime thing it was that Jesus did, thus to give up all thoughts of his own ease and comfort, and take upon himself a world's suffering. Then I should hope that this Christmas would leave with you some deeper love for him, and make you readier to live a noble life.

Perhaps, if I can do this at all, it will be by some

illustrations which fall within your experiences of life. Listen then. At a boarding-school for boys, there was once a rather feeble and sickly child, who was neither very handsome in person nor very pleasant in disposition. He was lame, and so could not join in the sports of his fellows. He was dull, and always behind in his studies. No one took much notice of him upon his first arrival, and so he took a dislike to the whole school. Being of rather a crabbed turn of mind, he resisted all proffers of friendship, and having been guilty of one or two little meannesses, he called down upon himself the ill-will of everybody.

Very soon, every little theft was laid to him, and if any one lost an article without knowing how, he was sure Peter had stolen it. Did any one find in his seat a cunningly-bent pin for him to sit upon, that must be Peter's work. In brief, he was charged with many things that he never dreamed of doing, and this made him sourer and meaner than ever. So that he got plenty of cuffs and hard knocks, and every one said, "Served him right."

Every one but one, a boy of about Peter's age, who could not help pitying his forlorn and unhappy condition, and often thought he would like to help him out of it if he knew how. But he could not discover any way to do this, and so the matter drifted along, getting always worse for poor Peter. At length, one

day as the boys were at play together, one of the older ones, who had been using his pocket-knife, suddenly missed it and accused Peter of having stolen it. Peter at once gave him the lie, coupled with a not very soft name, and words began to run high.

The whole school quickly gathered in a knot, and most of them sided entirely with the older boy. Now Fred, (the one who had taken pity on Peter,) did not believe that he had stolen the knife, as while it was being used, he was in a different part of the playground. But though he said as much, nobody listened to him, and the big boy steadily worked himself into a furious passion. Suddenly, as Fred stood beside him, he saw a terrible gleam of anger shoot from his eyes, and he raised his hand to strike the weak and cowering boy before him. Not clearly thinking of the consequences, but only feeling the injustice about to be done, Fred sprang forward to confront the assailant in Peter's place. The blow descended upon his own head, and felled him to the earth, where, save for some slight quivering of the muscles, he lay like a log. Then there was a great commotion. Fred was picked up and taken to his room, where it was found that he was seriously hurt, his head having fallen upon a stone. Had the frailer boy received the blow, it might have killed him.

The knife was soon afterwards found just where

the owner had left it, so as to clear Peter of all suspicion. His fellows began to see that he was not quite so black as they had painted him. But upon Peter himself the effect of this scene was marvellous. He could not mistake Fred's motive, for aside from what the latter had said, he saw his fists tightly clenched as he sprang before him. That any one should freely step into his place and take the suffering intended for him,— this was a thing incredible to Peter, had he not seen it with his own eyes. It gave him a new conception of goodness, and made him so thoroughly ashamed of his mean disposition, that from that day he began to mend his ways, and grew to be one of the best-loved boys in school.

Now what do you say of this act of Fred's? I say it was an act of which any one might well be proud, thus to take upon himself the penalty of another's supposed transgression. This was what Christ did. Evil thoughts and evil passions were ruling the earth. He, though without sin himself, stepped forward and received the blows of cruel men. He even let them kill him, that others might be freed from sin. Children,— his was a life and death which cannot be matched in all history.

Here is another short story — which if not entirely true, is at least all out of my own head, and so will be new to you. Through what befell a little girl, I hope to teach you the same lesson: that those who

suffer for the sake of others, are the most worthy to be held in remembrance. When the world was much younger than it is now, before there were any railroads or even any stores, when the wide, roaring fire-place was used for cooking as well as for warmth, there sat one evening before its great blaze, a girl, dreaming of the coming Christmas. She was the daughter of a mountaineer, who dwelt up among the high Swiss Alps, and besides her father and mother, knew hardly any one save the little herd of goats, with whom much of her life was passed.

As I said, she was sitting before the open fire, for the first winds of winter had begun to rage, and the air was full of driving snow. The child was alone, her mother being busy in the fading light out of doors, and her father not yet returned from the village below. So the child fell to dreaming about the Christmas only a week or two distant, and wondered whether this year Santa Claus would remember her.

Suddenly, as she watched the leaping blaze, a monstrous pair of fur-covered boots dangled into sight from one corner of the chimney, and a moment later down dropped the stumpy form of Santa Claus himself. Before he could get the smoke out of his eyes, the child cried out, "Oh, Santa Claus! shall I have a present this year?" "Humph!" said the old fellow, brushing the soot off his nose, "how can I tell before

I know whether you deserve one or not?" "Oh, but what shall I do to deserve one?" said the girl eagerly. "That would be folly for me to tell you," replied he. "Do what you think is right, and if it pleases me you shall have a present." "But how shall I know when you are pleased?" asked she again. "Oh, I may perhaps look in upon you again before Christmas," replied Santa Claus, giving a sharp look into her eyes.

So saying, and having taken a glance about the room, to see what the child needed in case she deserved anything, he made a little hop into the corner of the chimney, away from the blaze, and after some wriggling and kicking, disappeared as he had come. The child sprang forward and shouted after him, "Santa Claus! let it be a large doll, with red shoes." But whether Santa Claus gave a grunt or a chuckle in reply, or whether it was only the crackling of the fire, she could not tell.

She said nothing of what she had seen, but secretly resolved that she would win that doll. She was very good, indeed, the next day and week; so prompt and thoughtful in the discharge of all her duties, that it attracted the notice of her parents. From something that she said in her sleep, they gathered what she had seen, and what she so much desired.

But, though every evening she watched for Santa Claus in the chimney, no Santa Claus appeared. I

suppose he knew that she was thinking always of the doll, and did not see much virtue in her behavior.

So at last Christmas Eve came, and with it a terrible storm. The wind howled most dismally about the mountaineer's little cottage, and the snow drove through the cracks of the rude door. Mother and father were dozing in the chimney corner, and the girl sat before the fire, looking into it half eagerly, half sadly, because Santa Claus had not appeared to her again — hoping against hope that the morrow might bring her the doll. All at once she jumped to her feet, turned toward the door and stood listening. Another gust swept by, and surely she heard it again — this time quite distinctly — the bleat of a kid from the cliffs above. Waiting only to snatch up her shawl, she quickly undid the fastening of the door, and, without waking her parents, passed out into the storm.

Once more she stood and listened, and again the beseeching cry came down the mountain-side, mingled with the howling of the wind.

She instantly recognized it as the bleat of her favorite white kid, whom she loved almost as well as her father and mother, and better than all the world beside. Bitterly did her heart reproach her, for she had been so absorbed in her dreams that she had not gone out that evening, as was her wont, when the goats were driven into the fold, to see if her darling

was safe. He must have strayed from the herd, and her father had not noticed it.

There was a narrow path leading up through the rocks behind the fold, which the child knew perfectly well, and although it was night, and the snow was fast drifting it full, up this path she sprang. Many times she slipped and fell on the steep ascent, but soon she came out upon an open space and paused to listen. Again she caught the plaintive cry, and once more on and up she ran. But at the next pause the voice of the kid was as far away as ever. Evidently he was bewildered by the storm, and was going farther away from home. She shouted his name with all her strength, hoping that he might hear her and wait till she came up with him. The wind, however, which bore his cry to her, took hers away from him, and the poor little fellow wandered on.

The child pursued, straining every nerve to overtake him — ever pausing to get the direction from his voice, and shouting in reply. She had long ago forsaken the main path and wandered off among the ledges, where even the goats had need of their sure footing to prevent them from falling over the precipices. But wherever a goat could go she could follow; and, heeding no danger, she hurried on. The wind had blown the shawl from her shoulders; her hands were torn from clinging to points of rock; the snow filled her hair and blinded her eyes, so that she was often obliged to pause till a gust had swept

by, to enable her in the dim light to distinguish her way. Sometimes, indeed, she was on the point of turning back, but then the cry of her kid would reach her ears, and with a sob of mingled hope and fear she would start forward again.

At last she knew that she was nearing him, for his bleat grew more distinct. Still it was short and faint, and the child knew that he had fallen exhausted. Soon she came near enough to make him hear her and answer her pet name.

Suddenly all the air was filled with a distant roar, louder than the storm, like the low roll of distant thunder. The child stood numb with terror as she heard it, for it was a loosened avalanche. She knew that the path by which they often descended was just before her. Nay! that if it were a large one it might sweep over the very spot where she was standing. All her soul was in one thought — to save her kid. A few springs brought her to the spot where he was lying. As she bent over him, he struggled to his feet. She had just time to clasp him in her arms, when the avalanche struck her and whirled her away. Not far, however, for she was just upon its edge; and, clutching with one hand, while the other held her kid, at the branch held down to her by a friendly tree, she held on with all her remaining strength. After a moment all was still. The avalanche had passed, her kid was safe, and then she knew nothing more.

Soon after the girl had left the cottage, her father awoke from his doze, to find her gone and the door unfastened. At first he thought nothing of it; but, as she did not return, he stepped to the door, where he heard her calling to her goat on the mountain-side above. Seizing his lantern, he rushed out and followed her. The fierce wind which prevented the kid from hearing her swept back her father's voice, and he could only follow her, as she did the kid. He was close upon her when the avalanche came, and after it had passed, was not long in finding her. When the child awoke from her stupor she found herself once more before the open fire. The first object she saw was a large doll, with red shoes, sitting in the chimney corner. The next she saw, or thought she saw, was the face of Santa Claus peeping down the chimney, all covered with the broadest smile. He lingered only long enough to give a very slow and emphatic wink, and then disappeared. Then she heard her mother saying, "It must be because my little girl was brave enough to risk her life to save a poor kid from perishing with cold, that Santa Claus has brought her this beautiful present."

This, then, is my story, and this is its lesson: that they who, out of love for others, will endure suffering to save them from it, are the noblest among their fellows; best loved by God and man. Most like to Christ, who was wounded and killed for the transgressions of others.

XI.

LOYALTY.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.
—*Rev.*, ii. 10.

THE Book of Revelation, as you all very well know, is the last book of our New Testament, and among modern Christians, is generally considered of the least importance. And yet there are so many beautiful things in it, that it is well worth any one's while to read and study it, though they may not understand all its pictures and symbols.

This promise which I want you to remember, as my text, is one of the finest passages in the whole Bible. St. John, the Revelator, relates that he was on the island of Patmos one "Lord's day," (our Sunday,) when he heard a voice behind him, commanding him to write what he should hear and see, to the seven churches of Asia. Then he fell into a vision, and saw the Spirit of Jesus, who sent a message to each of these churches. To that of Smyrna, he said that he was not unmindful of the sufferings it had endured and would thereafter be called upon to bear, but he left with it this promise, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

You know that in the old games of wrestling, running, etc., engaged in by the Grecian youth, whoever was judged the victor, was rewarded with a crown of laurels. So in the tournaments of the Middle Ages, when knights, all cased in armor, rode at full gallop through the lists, and endeavored to unhorse their adversaries by striking them with their spears; or, in more peaceful contests, tried who could most skillfully bear off a suspended ring upon the point of his lance, as he ran his steed underneath it — in these warlike games, the champion received a crown. The crown was a reward for well doing; so the promise of Jesus was: I will reward with life in another world, those who are faithful till death here.

Now I want to tell you, first, what it is to be faithful until death, and, second, how or in what ways, you may be faithful to the truth of Jesus.

I remember that when I was a boy at school, there was one story in our reading-book, which I never could read without crying outright. It was not that I merely whimpered a little, for I used regularly, when that story came round, to break entirely down before it was finished, so that I could not read a word, thereby making a spectacle of myself, to the amusement of some of my less sentimental playmates. So, as I did not relish being laughed at, any more than boys usually do, I generally devised some

excuse for staying at home whenever that piece was in the lesson. It was the story of a dog, and though many of your parents may remember it, I think it may be new to most of you. As it illustrates what it is to be faithful unto death, I will relate it as nearly as I can call it to mind.

A traveller was taking a long journey upon horseback, attended only by a very affectionate and intelligent dog. He carried with him a little bag of gold, with which to buy food for himself and his animals whenever he came to a town. But as his way led him for long distances over a lonely road, he had pistols to defend himself from robbers, and a bag in which to store food for himself and his dog; while his horse had often to make his dinner upon the grass which grew by the roadside.

One noontime he dismounted, and after unsaddling his horse, in order that the poor beast might get as much rest as possible, he partook of his luncheon, and calling his dog to guard him, lay down in the shade and fell fast asleep. When he awoke, the sun was already low in the heavens, and as he had far to go before reaching a sleeping-place, he made great haste to gather up his baggage, re-saddle his horse and continue his way. For the first few miles he rode at such a pace that he did not notice the absence of his dog; but as he drew rein to ascend a hill he found that he was gone, and stopped to call

him. At length he saw him coming far in the distance, and so resumed his journey. Very soon the dog overtook his master, and at once began to act very strangely, for he would stand in the way before him barking most furiously, so that the horse was frightened and did not like to go on. And when the traveller would not be turned aside, but compelled his horse to go forward, the dog ran by his side, still barking, and caught at the stirrups as though to hold him back.

Now the man was already vexed from having lost so much time, and was very impatient with what he at first considered his dog's playfulness. So he bade him sharply, "be quiet," and when he found that his command was not in the least obeyed, grew angry and gave him a severe blow with his whip. But the dog continued his former movements, and his master, now in a towering passion, began to imagine that the brute was mad; so without further consideration, he drew one of his pistols and shot him. The poor dog uttered a piteous cry, and instantly turned about and ran back toward the resting place.

As for the traveller, he muttered to himself some justification of his act, as angry people always will, when they have done something hastily which their conscience does not approve, replaced his pistol, and once more rode on. He had not gone far, however, when he accidentally discovered that his bag of gold

was missing. Then at once it flashed upon him that in the hurry of starting after his nap, he had in some way dropped it; that the dog had noticed it, and stayed for a while to guard the treasure, and that he had only been endeavoring to attract his master's attention to his loss, and induce him to turn back again.

Then indeed he was deeply concerned, not only for the safety of his bag, but for the life of the poor creature, which he had so hastily attacked. Backward he rode with all speed, and spots of blood along the roadside here and there, told him that the dog was still before him. As he drew near the place where he hoped to find his money, he discovered the faithful animal stretched upon the ground, and although unable to rise, the dog expressed his joy at his master's coming, by barks and whines. Upon a nearer approach he saw the bag of gold where he had dropped it. But all his thought then, was to save the life of the dumb servant, who had returned to guard his master's property, after that master had so cruelly wronged him. But it was too late. As the traveller threw himself from his horse, the dog, with one last effort, staggered to his feet, and as his master's hand was stretched out to him, that hand which had given him his death-wound, he had just sufficient strength to kiss it with all his old affection, and fall back dead.

Faithful unto death, surely ought to have been written over his grave, if ever man deserved to have it inscribed upon his tombstone. To be faithful is simply to do one's duty; the work which God, our Master, has appointed us to do. This poor dog knew it to be his duty to guard his master's property; and though his master distrusted him, and even shot him because he supposed he was no longer faithful to his trust, still returned to do his duty while life lasted. So we are faithful unto death, if we continue our work, notwithstanding dangers and trials, just as we would if the way were all pleasant.

Telling you one bit of my schoolboy experience, brings another to my mind, which may help you to see what I mean. Near the country school-house where I learned to read and write and cipher, was a large pond, which in the winter furnished capital skating. Besides this, men used to come with teams when the ice was very thick, to fish through it. They would cut a line of holes, at a little distance apart, across the pond. A man was stationed at each of these holes, bending down so that he could see into the water beneath, and armed with a long pole, at the end of which were large iron hooks. Then the sleighs would go far above, and drive back and forth on the ice, making a great noise, so that the fish were frightened, and dashing down past the line of holes, great loads of them were hooked out.

You may judge that this pond was on some days a great attraction, and as many of the scholars came for miles through the snow, bringing their luncheon with them, so soon as this was eaten, they took their skates and hurried off to spend their nooning upon the ice.

Now it was but natural, that being boys, they should be in no hurry to get back to the hot school-room and their books; so that sometimes stragglers from the pond would be coming in at all hours of the afternoon. This, of course, greatly disturbed the master and the school, and he soon made a rule that he would ring two bells for the opening of school, allowing sufficient time between them for the boys to reach the school-house from the pond. At the first they were to start, and at the second they must be in their places. But the very next day a conspiracy was formed by the large boys, which the smaller ones were compelled, under fear of dire pains and penalties, to join — a conspiracy to remain upon the ice as long as they pleased, and go back to the school-room in a body.

The expectation of course was that a fault committed by half the school, would not be punished very severely, if at all. There was one of the smaller boys, however, (I am sorry to say it was not I,) who resolved that he would manage to slip away when the bell rang, and obey the call.

Now perhaps some of you may think it a very mean resolution. But if you will consider a moment, you will see that he was brave, and not cowardly. The master's ferule, bad as it was, was nothing in comparison with what he had to expect from those tyrants, the big boys, if he offended them. It was simply that he respected and loved his teacher, that he thought the others were wrong, and that he resolved to do what was right, no matter how much it might cost.

So, as his fellows were all in the midst of a game, when the bell rang, he contrived to slip behind a little promontory, take off his skates and start for school, without being missed. He did not get far, however, before he was captured by one of the older scholars, who, although not in school that day, knew what was going forward, and at once, perceiving that he had captured a deserter, treated him to several dips in a snowdrift. To be brief, he detained and tormented the little fellow till he thought he would be late enough at school to get a whipping, and then let him go. But before he could find his skates and his hat, and get himself brushed clean of snow, the others had finished their play and set out for school by another way. So that he was there only in time to march in with the last of the stragglers, who, as they had not noticed his absence, supposed that he had been with them all the while.

Now, the boys had taken counsel without knowledge, when they imagined that the master would not punish all so severely as one or two. He wore a threatening frown as the young rebels came in, and when he had dismissed the class with which he was engaged, the whole of them were called up to give an account of themselves. No one had anything to say save the one boy who had tried to obey the rules of the school, and he told the story of his detention. But all the rest cried out that it wasn't true, and the master was forced to conclude that he had told a falsehood, for the sake of escaping punishment. Then, beginning at the head of the line, the first boy was bidden to hold out his hand, and once, twice, thrice and again the ruler descended upon it.

The heavy oak ruler was not something merely to look at in those days, but every time it came down upon the open palm the culprit was forced to cry out with pain, and went to his seat with a hand that felt as if it had been under a sledge-hammer. Down the line the schoolmaster came, and the groans and lamentations increased, until he reached the scholar who, alone of them all, did not deserve punishment. It was easy to see that it hurt the master as much as the boy, for there had been a genuine affection between them. But he would not show partiality, and his blows were just as heavy as before. The boy set his teeth hard, but uttered not a sound, nor did a

single tear spring to his eye, until the teacher bade him hold out his other hand and take double punishment, because he had told a lie. The injustice of that broke him down, and he went to his seat sobbing as though his heart would break.

Now I want you boys to stop a moment and think what you would have done in his place. Would you have hated that teacher, and stopped trying to observe his rules and do your duty? If so, you would have been of meaner spirit than the dog I have told you of, and far less faithful than this boy was. For, although he could not establish his innocence, because the one who was at fault would not confess, through fear of a whipping, he went on as before, as studious, attentive and obedient as ever.

After the matter had been partially forgotten, the big boy made some boasts to his companions of what he had done, so that finally, though not until the very end of the term, the truth reached the master's ears; and then, though he could not take back the punishment he had given, he cleared the boy's character of the charge of falsehood before the whole school.

You children will find, as you grow older — if you have not already discovered — that it is not always agreeable to do one's duty, but that it sometimes causes one to suffer great injustice. Jesus told His disciples that simply for speaking His truth they would be made to suffer terrible persecutions, and so

it proved. You may think that if you do right, you ought to be the more respected and loved by your fellows; but there may be times when others will hate you, and say evil things against you, if you try harder than they to observe the law of God.

You may ask, can God be deceived, then, as the traveller and the schoolmaster were? And does He punish us when we are innocent? You are to believe just the opposite of this; you are to believe that, however men may unjustly suspect or accuse you of wrong, God sees the right, and will take care that in the end you shall be much better off for having done your duty.

Think which you would rather have been,—the boy who, by brute force, had caused another to suffer in body and mind, and who must forever carry with him a remembrance of the wrong he had done—or the boy who, though under a cloud for a time, had all the while his own conscience to approve him, and finally won all the more esteem, because he held to his duty when it cost something.

Depend upon it, children, that they who are faithful until death will always gain by it in the end, both on earth and in heaven.

I want, secondly, to show you in what ways you may be faithful. I can only say a few words, for I would not attempt to tell you all the ways, but only to show you that you can find plenty of occa-

sions, if you seek them, for being faithful to the truth, as Jesus taught it, when for the time being it may cost you pain.

You boys, when some one has injured you, and you are smarting under the sense of wrong, will probably feel like paying it back in the same coin — blow for blow, hard words for hard words. But you may remember that Jesus said, "Overcome evil with good;" still, though you may feel, what is true, that it is far nobler to punish a wrong by scorning to notice it, than by descending to its own level and doing the same thing in return; still, your playmates, some of them, may call you coward if you undertake to disarm your enemy by being kind and courteous.

I know that nothing hurts a boy more than to call him a coward; but if you will bear the taunt, rather than degrade yourselves, that is being faithful to the truth of Jesus, and will surely win for you in the end. If some vile boy should throw mud at you, would not you be obliged to get into the mud, and to soil your hands, if you threw it back? So, whoever gives you a blow or a foul word soils his soul, and if you give it back again you soil your soul. Whatever may be the satisfaction you may feel in beating your enemy at his own game, it will not pay you to degrade yourself in doing so.

You girls, although you never fight with your hands, feel sometimes tempted, I dare say, to do it

with your tongues; and so the same lesson is for you, that no matter what struggle it may cost, it is better to be faithful to the precepts which Jesus expects you to follow. I am not so well acquainted, of course, with the experience of girls as of boys; but I am sure that there are many temptations which allure you, for the sake of some present ease or advantage, to forsake what Jesus and your own heart tells you to be your duty. But remember always how much nobler it is to remain faithful; how much brighter and happier your lives will be after the momentary self-denial is made, than if you had always to carry with you the consciousness of having acted a mean, ignoble part. Remember, also, that God is watching all those who profess to believe in and follow His truth, and that He only promises the crown of life to such as are faithful, even unto death.

XII.

HOW HARD IT IS TO BE GOOD.

Take up the cross and follow me.—*Mark* x. 21.

"IT IS so hard to be good," said a little girl, half to herself and half to her brother, with whom she was at play. "It is so very hard to be good, and I don't see any use in it."

She possessed some little temper, and had recently been chidden by her mother for an outburst of passion. The present trouble was that she had been trying to build a very complicated house of blocks, which would tumble over just as she had almost completed it. At last her patience gave out, and, seizing a handful of blocks, she was in the act of flinging them angrily across the room, when her mother's rebuke came to her mind. The remembrance at once stopped her hand, and provoked the petulant exclamation, "It is so hard to be good! No, I don't see any use in it, and you needn't look so shocked about it, either," said she, turning somewhat fiercely upon her brother.

In truth, that young gentleman's face bore evidence of some dismay. At Sunday School, the day before, he had heard for the first time the story of

certain children who were devoured by bears because they had mocked a prophet; and, as he had on several occasions been guilty of irreverence toward his superiors, the story had made a great impression on his mind.

At this very moment the bears were in his thought, and he glanced rather nervously at the door, as though fearing that his sister's wickedness might provoke their appearance.

The door was shut, however, and, gathering courage, he replied, "No use in it? Think of" — think of the bears, he was going to say, but, remembering that his sister had already laughed at that story, he did not finish the sentence. "Well," said the girl, "maybe there is some use, but I don't see much, and I know it is dreadfully disagreeable sometimes. I should like to be just as wicked as I wanted to for once, and see how it would seem."

If her brother had been shocked by the previous speech, he was thunderstruck at this. There was at this moment a slight rustling at the door, and he was certain that the bears had come. But the door opened, and, to his relief, nothing more blood-thirsty than his mother entered.

The look upon her face, however, somewhat thoughtful and grave, told the children that she had overheard what had been said. Calling them to her side, she endeavored to show them of what use it is

to try to be good; and what she said to them is the story which I am about to tell you.

There was once a little brook, which made its way down a steep and high mountain-side; running amidst great rocks; dashing over frightful precipices; murmuring and weeping through deep ravines, where the sun never reached it. Working its way through tangled masses of driftwood, losing itself under piles of fallen trees, in many ways tormented and hindered, the poor brook was kept fuming and fretting, and lashed into white foam. And, as often as it dashed against the rocks, making its frothing spray fly into the air, or when it fell exhausted into some deep, dark pool, from the edge of an overhanging cliff, "Oh, dear!" said the brook, "this is a very hard life, and I should like to know what it amounts to. For my part, I should be glad to get out of this narrow zig-zag way, which well nigh drives me to desperation, and find a spot where I needn't do anything unless I have a mind."

At last one day, when near the foot of the mountain as it was about leaping over a ledge of rocks, the brook caught sight of a marsh at some little distance below; and it seemed so quiet and contented, and reflected the sun in such a beautiful way that the brook said, "Now, when I get there I shall be happy."

So it bounded hopefully along. But as it began to

draw near the marsh, strange sounds filled the air. The screams of hawks and crows and various birds of prey, and the hoarse croak of the frogs, were louder than its own noise, and began to fill it with fright. As it came nearer and nearer, the earth became a dirty black mud; in place of the clean and shining rocks, its bed was a mass of slime and ooze. Then, as its motion grew slower, it found itself shadowed by tall reeds; and through its own bright waters, now dark with mud and filth, all manner of ugly reptiles crawled.

Long days did the brook lie there sweltering in the sun, dreaming of its mountain course, in which, in spite of hard knocks, it had been happy, and scarcely knowing that it moved at all, except as from time to time it noticed that it had changed its place.

How bitterly did it repent that it had even wished to find such a place, and with what earnest longing did it pray to be delivered.

But the sorrows of the brook drew to a close, for there was a way out of the marsh, and at length the brook found it. Then, also, was it delivered from its scrambles among the rocks, for it found a smooth and even road of pebbles, along which it ran singing with quiet joy, through miles of meadows, bordered by banks of flowers, and overlooked by stately trees, until, after a whole summer's journey, it ran into the sea. Its way down the mountain side was hard, but did it not repay the brook to keep on?

* * * * * *

There were once two young birds hatched and reared in the same nest, in whose breasts the ambition to fly began to be so strong that, one morning after their parents had gone out to make some calls, they resolved upon the attempt.

So they crawled to the edge of the nest, where they balanced themselves as well as they were able; their little tails bobbing up and down; their slender feet making a convulsive clutch now and then, to avoid tumbling over.

There they stood a long time, swaying back and forth, urging each other to make the first attempt, until at length the bolder of the two, after a great deal of useless flapping of his wings, and several false starts, did really make a little hop into the air and fly for dear life. It was very feeble flying, however, for he went downward about as fast as onward, and regained his feet rather clumsily in the deep grass at the foot of the tree.

His brother, seeing that he was not hurt, roused his own courage, and a moment afterward both stood panting, side by side, upon the ground.

"Well," said one, "that's too hard work for me. Let them fly that wish; I shall hereafter be quite content to walk." Of course, his brother tried to dissuade him from this foolish conclusion, but all in vain. Worms couldn't be found up in the air, he

said, and what was the use of mounting up into the sky, if there was nothing there to eat. He thought it might be easy to fly; it certainly looked so; but now that he had discovered how hard work it was, no more of it for him; there wasn't any use in it.

So, although the parent birds came back, and grew very earnest in their entreaties that he would try to do as other birds did, and although his brother, making constant trial, found that his wings grew stronger and would carry him easier and to greater distances —notwithstanding all this, the mean-spirited little fellow went poking about in the deep grass all day long looking for worms; and, indeed, he found so many before nightfall, that the strongest pair of wings would hardly have supported him.

What was the consequence? A very sad one. For while the bird who had kept trying to fly was able at sunset to get back to the nest, the other was obliged to spend the night upon the ground, and when morning came not so much as a feather of him was left. His family surmised that he had been carried off by a cat; but at any rate, nothing more was ever seen of him.

Now, just as it was well for the brook to keep on its way, though it was so trying — just as it was of use for the young bird to learn to fly, though it was hard work — so it is worth the while of children to try to be good, even though it costs them many struggles.

To allow oneself to be wicked is to be lazy, to dislike work and sigh for such a good time in doing nothing as the brook wanted; and which, when it was found in the swamp, proved worse than anything it had known.

It is hard to be good, just as it is hard to get knowledge; but in the end it will repay you for all your toil. How much it will be worth in the end, perhaps you will get a hint from the following story.

There was once a child to whom an angel appeared in a dream, and said, "I am sent to you from a great King."

"Who is this King?" said the child.

"It is He," replied the angel, "who made the earth, and who gave you life; who has watched over you when you have not known it, and who now wants you to try to take care of yourself."

"Why does He want this of me?" again asked the child.

"That He may know how worthy you are of what He has already done for you," was the reply.

"And if I do not act as He wishes me, what then?"

"Then you will find sorrows and troubles."

"How can I know what He would have me do?"

"Listen," said the angel. "There was once a man on earth who spent all his life in doing good to others, and whose enemies killed him because he was

so noble. This man said to his followers, 'Take up the cross and follow me.' So I say, take up your cross and follow him." And with these words the angel vanished.

When the child awoke, these words were in her mind:

"Take up the cross and follow me."

But they were a riddle to her and she knew not what they meant.

In her work and in her play that day and many days after, they continually rose in her memory, and long she puzzled in vain to find out what meaning they could have for her. And so day by day, as the vision haunted her, the child grew sad and thoughtful. The feeling grew upon her that she ought to do something she was not doing; but because she did not know what that something was, she tried to do nothing except to get through with the tasks which others gave her.

She had happy moods, and she had miserable moods, but, sad to say, the dark hours grew longer, and the bright ones fewer and shorter. She became cross and peevish, was easily angered, said very harsh and bitter things, and at times seemed to hate everybody and everything that lived.

One night the angel came to her again, and said, "Come with me." So they went out into the fields, and found it shining day. Presently they came to a

garden, and entering, the angel conducted her to one corner, where there was a mass of briars and thistles, much higher than her head, and looking as ugly and forbidding as you can imagine.

The child in her dream was just thinking of that bramble-bush into which a certain wise man jumped and scratched out both his eyes,—that if he had jumped into *this* pile of briars, probably his ears and his nose would have gone also.

The angel, pushing them aside, disclosed one little sickly rosebush, feebly holding up one faded blossom, where a bit of sunshine stole through its prison-bars, but evidently exhausted and dying for want of air and light.

"These briars and thistles must be cleared away," said the angel, "before the rose can live." So saying he again vanished.

The child was passionately fond of flowers, and eagerly set to work to liberate the rose. She toiled and toiled, as it seemed to her many hours, but in the end she found her hands so torn and bleeding, that she could no longer use them, her dress in rags, and still the mass of ugly weeds before her, upon which she had scarcely made an impression.

What could she do but sit down and cry? And cry she did, not merely in her dream, but in reality, for she awoke sobbing violently, and her pillow was wet with tears. It was only a dream, but she thought she understood the lesson.

This sickly rose was her own better nature, which she had allowed to be smothered with weeds. She was unhappy because she was like this rose, shut out from the light, and wounded with thorns. It was taking up her cross, to fight down these weeds of evil, and this she would do without delay. So at this task she toiled and toiled. In spite of the pain and the struggle which it cost, she persevered until summer had turned into winter, winter into summer again, and another birthday had come round.

On this day she made a party for her young friends, which passed off very miserably indeed. Something went wrong at the outset, and before the day was done, she had seriously quarrelled with about half her guests. All her ugly and discontented feelings came back to her, and she went to sleep that night remembering the dream, and thinking that though she had worked at the briars a whole year, the rose was no better off.

It was very discouraging. First she had not tried to be good; and she had found herself with a very unhappy disposition. Then she had tried, but she found it was too late, and now everybody would hate her always, and nobody would love her.

But perhaps the angel would come back to her once more, and in that hope she fell asleep. The angel did visit her, and this time she was struck with the great love and pity that shone in his face. She

noticed too that on his forehead were scars, as if thorns had torn the flesh, and his garment, instead of being pure white, was worn and soiled, and covered with dust, as if from a long journey.

"Take up your cross and follow me," he said, and the child, not quite understanding him, yet rose and followed.

She was still thinking of her sins, and how to be rid of them, when the angel stooped down to her as she walked by his side, and folding her in his arms, said: "So you could not clear away the brambles, my poor child? I see, I see, your hands are sadly torn."

"Alas! they were so many," replied she.

"They were very many," said the angel, "but now learn that to bear your cross, is not to fight with it. Think no more about your sins, though they are heavy for your young shoulders, but come and see what I shall show you."

Then all at once they were in the midst of a great city. The crowd rushed hurriedly along, pushing and jostling them, as they strove to work their way through the noisy streets. Suddenly they turned aside into a low doorway, and mounted up and up the dirty, creaking stairs, until they stood in a rude garret, and saw before them a poor mother, pressing to her bosom her dying child.

Its pale eyes looked up to her with a feeble smile, as she wildly moaned to see the light of life fade out

of them. But the angel stepped forward, and took its wasted hand in his, and straightway the color came back to its poor little cheek. Its eye kindled with new life, and as the angel released its hand, its arms, a moment before so lifeless, clasped its mother's neck in a close embrace. She, too happy to speak, looked her gratitude, and so they left her.

They went into many sorrowing homes, and stood by many a bedside of pain, but always when they came away they left joy behind them.

At last they could enter no more dwellings, for the crowd came forth to meet them. The sick were brought forth upon couches, and the angel healed them.

Many came with great sorrow and anxiety in their faces. But he looked into their eyes, spoke to them a few words of love and hope, and sent them away happy and comforted.

Then the child began to feel a great desire to do as the angel did. At first she did not believe that she could, but presently, as a wan and wasted little girl crept to her feet, she forgot all her doubts, and stretching forth her hands, took the girl in her arms, and kissed her. Instantly her love drove disease out of the hunger-pinched face, and she was answered with a kiss.

Then she forgot everything else, for a long time, only to do as she had seen the angel do.

When she looked around again he was gone, but somehow she felt that he was over her, and for hours and hours, as it seemed to her, she kept on, feeling a happiness in her work such as she had never known before.

At last she woke from her dream to find it broad day, and the sun shining into her room. Once more her pillow was wet with tears, but this time with tears of joy. There was no mistaking the lesson now. Being good meant doing good; and to take up the cross, was to bear her sins and trials as patiently as she could, while she sought for ways to help and comfort those about her.

After this she was a happy child; the old bad thoughts and feelings would sometimes rise, but she always knew how to stop them, by turning her attention to the happiness of others. This is how she found it of use to try to be good.

And so, children, shall we all find that it is worth all that it can cost, never to cease trying to do good, for it is the only way to the highest happiness.

XIII.

FIDELITY IN LITTLE THINGS.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much. —*Luke*, xv. 10.

ONE thing which troubles children not a little, and which troubles some people all through life, is a failure to see that it is worth while to be good in little things, and a desire to be all at once very noble and great. They want their blossoms to become all at once full-grown apples, and do not like to wait till the little, hard, sour thing has time to grow and ripen.

They read, perhaps, of the gentle and courageous knight, who long ago undertook so many adventures to help the needy and do justice to those who suffered wrong; of the many heroes and heroines of both ancient and modern days, whose great deeds will make them famous for many hundred years to come; and reading, they think, "How I should like to do something noble and brave like that." They resolve that when they grow up, they will seek out some opportunity of proving to the world how generous and noble they are, so that the world may put their names into its history and its songs; and yet

all the while they may be so selfish and mean in their homes and among their playmates, as to be generally disliked.

I do not mean, of course, that many children are so selfish as that. But I want you to see that one may wish to be very noble, and yet be very mean; because we all of us have a feeling sometimes, when our attention is called to the many little ways of being unselfish, thoughtful, and polite, that it is so small a way of being good, and amounts to so very little, that we should like to do some good deed which would amount to something.

I want you to see, moreover, that every one is obliged to learn by little and little to be brave and kind; so that after all, if the little rules of conduct are not obeyed, the great ones will not be minded either. You have each of you been told over and over again, that if you begin by telling falsehoods and doing wrong to other children, you will grow up to be shunned of men, as untruthful and unjust; and that if you begin by doing right and being generous, you will grow up to be respected and loved. And you have said, "Oh! of course I know that," and very likely have forgotten all about it in half an hour.

Now I should like to be able to teach you what that means, so truly, that you may never forget it, but have it always in your thought. This and something more; that if you are ever to do any great deed

like those you read about, you must be great in such ways as you can, even now.

You may be sometime placed where your courage and presence of mind will save your own and hundreds of other lives; but if you are a coward now, you will be a coward then, and the opportunity to do a noble thing will be lost to you.

This is a verse of Scripture which I should like to have you remember in connection with this subject. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." To show you what is the meaning in this text that I wish you to remember, let me tell you a fable. A very old one, it is true, but I will tell it in my own way and perhaps you may find it interesting. It shall be about a bee and a butterfly.

The bee was one of those happy and cheerful little things, which in summer goes zig-zagging over the fields, and helps to make that delightful, drowsy hum which fills the summer air. Not one of those great pompous fellows in yellow and black, whose sole business seems to be to fly in at open windows and frighten children; but a plain and modest little bee, who never came near houses, but lived altogether in the sunshine and among flowers.

The butterfly was a gorgeous creature in black and gold, who might be a fairy prince in disguise, and

who was continually taking little airy, purposeless flights, or sipping daintily and leisurely the sweets of the flowers.

The two had never met, though the bee had often admired from a distance the butterfly's resplendent wings, and now and then, when she felt a little romantic, had wondered whether he would take any notice of such a homely body as she. But one morning it chanced that as the butterfly alighted upon a rose which looked particularly inviting, the bee was just creeping out, heavily laden with honey, to fly away to her hive. You may suppose her small heart was all in a flutter, to find those great eyes suddenly fixed upon her, and when she was not looking her neatest either, but was in quite a wretched plight with the honey which she had accidentally smeared upon her wings and body.

So she made as much haste as she was able, to gather up her sticky feet and take to flight. But the butterfly was curious and detained her by a question. Fanning himself in a lordly way, with his beautiful wings, and looking very much amused at the nervousness of the poor bee, he asked her what she did with the honey which she had stored up in those funny little sacks upon her thighs. She answered timidly that she carried it home, to lay up against the coming winter. And when he questioned her further, and she found him really a sympathetic listener, she

opened her heart to him and told him readily all about the queen bee whom she served, the drones who would not work, the beautiful way in which they constructed the honey-comb, how much honey they had already gathered, and how much more they hoped to put in store if the weather continued fine.

So flushed and confident did she become in telling her own story, that when she had finished she felt emboldened to ask, "And you, sir, do you have no hive, and gather no honey?" "No," replied the butterfly. "But do you not know that the winter is coming on, when all the flowers will die?" asked the bee, wonderingly. The butterfly did know it most assuredly, but he was good enough to inform the bee that she was very foolish and superstitious to work as though the winter were coming to-morrow, "For," said he, "winter is yet a great way off. There will be plenty of time by and by to prepare for it, and meantime it is the part of wisdom to enjoy one's self."

"But," persisted the bee, "when winter does come, you have no hive; what will you do?" "Oh! without doubt I shall find a shelter," said the butterfly, "and not only a shelter, but plenty of food already stored up." And then he entered into a long argument to show what right he had to expect that the God who created him, would take care that all his wants were supplied.

"Here," said he, "in the present I am surrounded

by every thing which can gratify my tastes. Every thing is beautiful. I am continually finding some new thing to delight me, and as for food, why there are oceans of it running to waste. Why should I doubt the future? Will not the Power which is so wondrously good to me now, take care of me then?"

He even went so far in his discourse as to accuse the bee of want of faith in God, because she was anxious about the winter, and wanted to bestow his pity upon her, because her life was so tied down to small daily duties, that she could not go out in search of great pleasures.

Here, however, the bee interrupted him, for she had not a little pride, and made haste to assure him that she should accept no pity for doing what she felt it her duty to do. "And do you not think then," she added, "that God meant us to take care of ourselves, and instead of depending wholly upon his bounty, to lay up, little by little, stores for the future?" But to this the butterfly gave no other answer, than that he considered it a very petty business to be engaged always in providing one's breakfast and dinner; and as for him he minded greater things, believing that the small ones would take care of themselves. And so saying, he spread his wings and sailed majestically away.

The Bee flew thoughtfully home, so absorbed in

her reflections, that she several times wandered from the "Bee-line," and losing her way, was obliged to stop and fly about in a circle until she found it again.

She did not altogether believe what the Butterfly had said, but it was the first time she had ever heard the like, and it troubled her somewhat. "Can it be," she thought, "that I am foolish to work so busily? Who knows but if I were to leave the hive, and go off seeking my fortune, I should find, as he said, some great store of the sweetest honey, so that I should not need to gather it any more little by little, and carry it so far. And he talks so fairly too, and has such lovely wings. Perhaps if I should ask him, he would let me fly away with him, and keep near him. Then I should have nothing to do but listen to him, and see always new and splendid things. Oh! how beautiful that would be!"

Still she could not quite make up her mind to take so great a step, and so she went on from day to day as before, only that always a vague longing and regret filled her with unrest, and sobered her happy song.

All the rest of the summer she had less heart in her work, for the dream of pleasure had entered into her hitherto contented soul, and gathering honey seemed to her, as the butterfly had said, a very petty business.

Now and then she met him in his flights, and

longed to ask him if he had yet found any great treasure, but he never noticed her. He had evidently forgotten all about her, and she could not quite summon up courage to address him. But as the season wore on and flowers began to get scarce, she noticed that the Butterfly was just as gay and idle as ever. She could no longer doubt that he had realized all his expectations, and felt sure that all her work, day by day, had been utterly wasted.

Then indeed she felt the temptation stronger than ever to leave her home, and go out to join her fortunes with his; and if she had not been too timid, she would have done so.

The truth was however that the Butterfly began to feel the loss of a breakfast, now and then, and, though he kept up his fine appearance, to doubt if his philosophy had been entirely sound. He thought about the future as little as possible, but that could not prevent the future from coming on. The first frosty nights of autumn stiffened him sadly, and the want of food weakened his spirits as much as his body, so that finally he gave up in despair and fluttered down under a leaf to wait for the end.

It was a cold and cheerless morning, and a kind of numbness came upon him, from which he was suddenly aroused by a subdued hum which went slowly by. Looking up he caught sight of his little friend the Bee, and instantly remembered that she must

have food and shelter, enough and to spare. So because his pride was utterly gone, he roused all his energies to follow her and beg enough to keep life in his poor body.

The Bee flew slowly, for she was thinking of the Butterfly, whom she had not seen now for some time, and thinking that he must have gone to a summer clime, while she must remain shut up during the long dismal winter.

So, nerved by the strength of despair, the butterfly managed to keep her in sight, until at last he saw her alight at her hive, about which no other bees were stirring, and creep regretfully in. Summoning all his powers for one last effort, he moved his wings a few times, and fell before the entrance, entirely exhausted, and unable to move a limb.

The short day soon passed, and still no bees issued forth. The sun went down, but still the butterfly was lying there upon his side, and no strength came back to him. The bee sat in her cosy cell all the night, dreaming of her hero in distant lands, while all the time he lay dying before her door.

In the morning, when she peeped forth to see what the weather might be, there she saw him, half covered with the first little fall of snow. Back she went in all haste, and loaded herself with food, which she brought out to him, but he was quite dead, and not even the odor of the honey would revive him,

though she carefully brushed the snow from his still beautiful wings, and waited long and patiently to see if the morning sun would not bring life to him.

When all hope was over, bitterly did she mourn, not only for the dead butterfly, but for her vanished dreams. Had she been human, she would have remembered the old saying, "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." As it was, she only felt in her instinctive way, that she had been right, and that he had been wrong.

So when the spring came again, she went back to her work as cheerfully and contentedly as ever, and indeed taught by her experience, she became an example to all the rest, of a happy and industrious disposition.

No fable is good for anything without a moral, and the moral of this is plain. It is folly to seek for great things in life while we overlook the little ones; and if we take care for the little ones, the great will follow as matter of course. This moral I wish you to apply to your minds, in order to teach you that the great qualities of heart and soul which will make your lives happy and successful, and yourselves respected by God and your fellows, — these qualities cannot be found already stored up, in after years, any more than the butterfly could find laid up for him a winter's supply of honey, but must be gathered little by little now, through your goodness and

gentleness in every day affairs. You must not get the notion that whenever the occasion offers, you can be just as great and noble as you would like to be.

For example, you all remember some of the frightful steamship disasters that have occurred during the recent years, and the great panic which has seized upon many of the passengers, when they were brought face to face with death; and I dare say some of you have thought, "if I had been there, how brave and calm I should have been," or, "if I had been one of the men, I should have thought of just the right thing at the right moment, and saved a great many lives." Now that depends upon how brave and clear-headed you are in small emergencies. If you get easily frightened by little things, the chances are that you would be the very last person to withstand any great shock, no matter how much you may admire courage. If you learn to be brave in slight dangers, then you may expect not to be cowardly, if you are called upon to stand in great peril.

So you need to cultivate, to store up as it were, all great and good qualities of mind, and then you will be ready for whatever may come to you. You must store them up for yourselves, if you would have them at all. God has made it necessary for us all to *work* for them, as most men have to work for their daily bread, and we can get them only little by little.

This is what Jesus meant when he said, "He that

is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." I hope you will take pains to look up that text, and repeat it over to yourselves, until you know it so thoroughly that you can never forget it. If you will so fix the saying in your memories, it will be to you always a reminder that if ever you are to do anything in the world, of which you can be glad and proud in after years, you must first learn to do thoroughly, and as though God were watching you, all little things.

XIV.

PATIENCE.

"AS patient as Job," says the old proverb. Who then was Job, and why should he be called a model of patience? He was a very rich man, richer than any of his countrymen;—he had not only gold and silver in abundance, but many large herds of sheep, oxen and camels. His greatest treasure, however, was in his children, whom he loved and cared for with all a father's devotion. Good and prosperous and happy was Job. A man who feared God, and one whom God loved. He had every reason, he thought, to believe that God would keep him in happiness and prosperity to the end of his life.

But suddenly one day a messenger appeared before him, to say that a band of robbers had carried away all his oxen, and killed the servants who were keeping them. No sooner had this messenger departed, than another came, bringing Job word that the lightning had fallen upon his sheep and destroyed them. While he was speaking came a third, to relate how another band of robbers had stolen all his camels. So the rich man, Job, found himself almost instantly reduced to poverty. But this was not the whole of

even the worst of his misfortunes, for a fourth messenger appeared bearing the most dreadful tidings of all. His sons and his daughters were feasting together, when a hurricane struck the house in which they were seated, and before any could escape, the building fell, burying them all, mangled and killed, beneath the ruins.

Thus in the same day, Job was made childless and a beggar. But he only said, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. But now in the midst of his poverty and his grief, Job was smitten with a most painful and loathsome disease. So wretched was his condition, that his wife bade him curse God, who had allowed all these evils to fall upon a just man. But he answered again, Have we received good from the hand of God, and shall we not also receive evil?

This is why Job is called the patient man. He did not rebel against these misfortunes which he could not cure, but submitted quietly to all his afflictions, believing that God would do him right in the end. These things are hard, said Job, but I must bear them, and though God kills me, yet will I trust in Him.

Still he was not entirely patient, for afterward he did complain. There has been but one model of perfect patience, and that was Jesus. He had as many sorrows as Job, yet did he never once complain of

the hardness of his lot; never once fly in a passion because he could not have the world as he would like it. When men told falsehoods about him and sought to put him to death, he never got angry with them; never said petulantly, Why will men be so cruel and unjust to me? When God suffered his enemies to nail him to the cross, he did not accuse God of neglecting him.

Jesus was entirely patient, and patience is one of the virtues he expects in all who try to follow him, even in little children.

What patience is, and what impatience — some of the ways in which children get impatient where they ought to be patient, this is what I should like to illustrate for you.

Two little acorns fell to the ground together one autumn, and together the wind swept them into a little crevice under a pile of rocks. When the spring sun warmed the rocks above them, both sprouted and struck their roots into the soil. Scarcely had they begun to grow, before both felt the narrowness of room given them. Their heads pushed against the unyielding mass of stone above them, and on every side but one, their twigs touched the wall of a prison. On that side they could catch a glimpse of the free air and sunshine. So one said to the other, "Come! let us make haste to push our way along under this low ceiling of rock, and

get our heads into the open day. Here, I am oppressed by the darkness, and stifled by the want of air." But the other answered, "Patience yet a little longer! Ours is indeed an uncomfortable position. But if we go that way, we must creep upon the ground and so deform ourselves for life. Perhaps if we wait awhile and strengthen our roots, Heaven will open a way above us."

But the first would listen to no such counsel. He was too impatient to feel the sun, and so, cursing the folly of his brother, cursing the wind which had blown him, when an acorn, among the rocks, cursing almost everything indeed, he bent his head and crept along as fast as he could toward the opening of his little cave.

He was in such a hurry that he could not think much about his roots in the soil, and so grew above the ground much faster than below. However, he worked along till he got his head into daylight, and then what did he find himself? A long naked stem crowned with three or four little sickly leaves. Not a very flattering comparison with the thrifty young oaks he found outside! It made him more unhappy than ever to see their beautiful proportions, and gave him new reason to curse the fate which had so unkindly shut in his infancy by giant rocks.

In only one thought could he find any comfort. He remembered the sad plight of his brother, who

had not the courage to try to escape, and thought "At least I am better off than he." Meanwhile what had that brother been doing? As a cat crouches for a spring, gathering her feet under her, and making sure that she has firm footing, so this little shrub growing in the darkness, had sent its roots deep into the ground; had crouched and waited as it were, till it should find an opening in the rocks.

At last one of its twigs did find a little seam, looking upward through the shelf of stone which covered it. It was a very small opening, but the young oak was not slow to improve it. First it pushed its slender trunk as far as possible into the seam, and then it grew and swelled and crowded the rocks a little further apart until it could lift its head a little higher. So it slowly and patiently elbowed its way, so to speak, little by little prying the seam into a wider opening, and at last it entirely loosed the great rocks from its fastenings.

One morning when the impatient shrub was trying to shake off the heavy dew, which bowed its lean stem to the earth, it heard a crash behind and overhead. Looking about it found that the great rock which once covered it, had been split in two and fallen apart, leaving all its long body trailing upon the ground, exposed to view. And there stood its brother, straight as an arrow, upright, strong and healthy. The wind rustled his leaves, and he seemed

to sigh with pity, as he looked down upon his weak companion, and perhaps he said in the language of trees, "Ah, if you could have had a little patience, you would not now lie there, hopeless of any strong and noble life." The first storm twisted the frailer shrub from its roots, and thus it perished. In its history you may read the results of an impatient disposition. The other grew to be a tall and stately tree, and enduring all storms as patiently as it had worked its way through the rock, it lived for many years, in enjoyment and content.

Now if the men whom we read of in the Bible could endure so many disappointments and sorrows without losing their patience; if even a little shrub can slowly and quietly, without noise or anger, move out of its way great rocks piled on top of it, how dreadfully ashamed of themselves ought children to be, when they find themselves screaming with passion because a little toy will not do what they want.

I dare say if I were to question closely, I should find some little girl, who during this very past week has been angry with her doll; so angry that she cried, because the poor thing could not sit in a chair and fold her hands as she was told to do. Or perhaps I should find another, who after a long struggle to get a very large button through a very small button-hole, had given a twitch and a growl like an angry kitten, and suddenly felt a longing to scratch

somebody or tear something all to pieces. I should not be surprised if I found also a little girl, who had asked for something that mamma thought she ought not to have, and who thereupon sat down on the floor, to indulge in a good long cry, feeling that mamma was the naughtiest, cruelest woman, and she the most abused child in all the world.

Equally certain I am that I could soon point out the boy who went skating the other day, and who not being able to get his skate firmly in place upon his foot, worked at it with numb fingers for a time, until his face began to grow very red, and sharp-cornered words to come out from between his teeth. This boy at last threw the senseless piece of iron with a great bang upon the ice, and only after having cuffed and made miserable a smaller boy who laughed at his vexation, could he sufficiently recover his temper to take up the skate again.

Then you know there is the boy, who was sharpening his pencil with a dull knife, and just as he had almost finished the point, once and again the lead broke short off up to the wood. He, too, lost his patience, struck viciously at the pencil with the point of his knife, but having gashed his own thumb instead, threw his knife one way and the pencil another, kicked the dog, and with his thumb in his mouth walked forth into the open air, feeling that this is a very unhappy world.

Of the others I need not speak. You will remember when you smashed your top with your boot-heel because you could not make it spin. When you bumped your head against the door, and with an angry exclamation turned round and kicked the door. When, because you thought Miss Dolly was obstinate, you threw her down and broke her nose.

You will all remember how in one way or another you have been impatient with people or things about you, and said or done what you were afterward ashamed of.

Now there are many reasons why impatience, even in little things, is bad, and patience good. Impatience is always destructive. Anger is blind, and like an owl in the daytime, rushes head-foremost at whatever stands in its way, thus doing much damage to itself, as well as to what it flies against.

A fit of impatience is bad, if only because it makes one feel like destroying something; a feeling which children too often yield to without thinking. It is bad because it leads us to do things in a hurry, which might be better done with more time. Just as it led the young oak to grow all wrong, when with patience it might have grown like other trees. It is bad because it makes us unhappy in ourselves and unpleasant to our friends. It is bad in all little things, because it is only by learning to be patient under little disappointments and trials, that we ever get to be patient at all.

All this let me strive to impress upon your minds, by relating the adventures of a bumble-bee, which a child saw in a dream. A certain boy, not very little nor yet very big, neither foolish nor extremely wise, was one day engaged in carting sand about his mother's flower-garden. As he himself was driver, horse, and the man who did the shovelling, all three, his duties were very heavy, and naturally enough soon made him feel rather tired. Thus it happened that he began to get himself, as a horse, mixed up with himself as a man. Having to do both the shovelling and the pulling, he could not keep the cart in the right road. First he was vexed, then he grew downright angry, and presently his mother found him in a perfect fury of passion, beating the cart as if it was to blame.

"Why," said she, "my little boy is for all the world like the big bumble-bee which flew in at the window this morning, and tried to sting the broom-stick, when the maid put him out again." So he was carried in to eat his supper, wondering if he did look like a bee. He thought about it a good deal, and went off to bed thinking.

Scarcely had he fallen asleep when he began to dream, and in his dream he not only looked like, but was a great big yellow and black bumble-bee. At first he was having a glorious time buzzing about here and there, and taking a sip from the flowers now and

then. He was just diving into a wild honey-suckle, when he caught a glimpse of something whizzing over his head. "Better not do that again," he said, with an angry growl. But just as he settled himself down once more, "whiz" it went a second time, almost touching him. "Do that again and I 'll sting you," said he, in a great rage, getting himself ready for a fight. "Whiz," it went again, and this time it fairly knocked him out of the flower. Darting up into the air, he saw a great ox feeding near, whose tail had undoubtedly caused the mischief. Down he pounced upon the back of the ox, resolved to teach him to be more careful where he swung that ungainly tail, when, "whiz" a fourth time it came, and this time very nearly killed him. Down he tumbled into the grass, sadly bruised, while the big ox walked away entirely unconscious that there was a bee anywhere in the neighborhood.

"Well," thought the bee, "I was a little too hasty that time." Then the scene of the dream changed. He was flying over a smooth sheet of water, admiring his own reflection, when he heard a great rumbling on the shore, and caught sight of something flashing in the sunlight. As he flew towards it, he saw that it was a mill-wheel slowly turning, for although in his dream he felt like a bee, he saw with his usual eyes. Being interested in the sight, he alighted upon a beam just above the wheel, to watch it for a time.

Presently up dashed a spray of water, and filled his eyes. Indeed, only by hastily drawing back did he avoid being thoroughly drenched.

"Do you mean to insult me?" asked he, crossly. But the mill-wheel answered never a word. Up came the spray again and again, and each time the bee grew more enraged, until at last he could endure it no longer. "But," thought he, "I shall not get caught as I was before. I shall wait for a good chance, and then I will show that wheel that a bee is not to be trifled with. So, after a minute, he saw his opportunity and darting at one of the shining buckets, began stinging away most industriously. But the wheel turned him under, and the first thing he knew, down came a torrent of ice-cold water, which washed him off into the stream.

There, despite all his floundering, he was helpless. The little fish jumped at him and made savage bites at his legs; his wings were so heavy with wet that he could hardly move them, and he was half numbed with cold. Whirling round and round, down he went with the current. He just caught sight of a big trout rushing at him with open mouth, when a wave lifted him up to a little rock, and left him there, with a shivering body and a very sour temper.

But before he had time fairly to dry himself in the sun, on went the dream, and so on went the bee. Away he flew in his zig-zag fashion, angry with all

the world. Literally he was mad as a wasp, as the old saying is. He wished that everybody and everything were rolled up into one body, and that he could sting and sting and sting, until he stung it to death. He flew in the face of dogs; buzzed about the heads of children; frightened everybody he could, and was angrier than ever, when he found that a lamp-post wouldn't get scared.

Finally he found an open window, and in he rushed to see if he could do any damage there. The room was empty, and after circling round it a few times, he dashed at the window again. But he had come in through the lower sash, which was raised, and he now attempted to go out through the upper half, which was closed. The consequence was that he came with a great thud against the glass, and fell stunned and senseless to the floor. As soon as he came to himself again he cried out, "Who struck me? Let me see who it was; I'll teach them a lesson." But no one appeared, and once more he attacked the glass. He could see right through; of course he could fly through; so he reasoned. Up and down, from side to side of the window pane, he buzzed and pushed, and beat his wings, until he was forced to stop and rest. But if his strength gave out, his temper kept hot, and he was just about to try it again, when the door opened, and in came the maid. Cautiously she approached him, holding up the brush end of her broom.

Now the boy in his dream knew perfectly that she wished him to cling to it till she could put him out of the window. But still he had all the feelings of a bee, and in his blind rage he flew at the broom. He didn't seem to hurt that very much, and catching sight of a hand upon the handle, made a dash toward that, and that he did hurt. With a scream of pain, the maid threw him to the floor, where she beat him with her duster until he could not stir, and she had just raised her foot to make a finish of him, when the dream vanished, and the boy found himself wide awake, sitting bolt upright in bed.

What do you think he did? Well, he laid directly down again to think over the dream. And the more he thought, the more certain it became that his mother was right in saying he was like a bumble bee; and that if the bee could have had a little more patience, and kept his temper, all his misfortunes would have been avoided.

This is the lesson I should like to leave with you. Besides being wicked, it is foolish to get so easily vexed with little troubles, and to act as if whatever crosses your wishes were done purposely to spite you. If, when you get impatient, and feel like doing something desperate to somebody, you will stop long enough to remember what a ridiculous figure the bee made, trying to sting the water-wheel, or break the window-pane by bumping his soft mite of a head

against it, I am sure you will see how much you are like him, and all your impatience will end in a laugh.

By-and-by, when you grow older, and life's harder disappointments come upon you, you will realize how god-like is the virtue of patience, and be very thankful if in these young days you have taken pains to cultivate it.

XV.

SINCERITY.

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, ... we have had our conversation in the world. 2 *Cor.* i. 12.

THIS text contains some hard words, but it has really a very plain and simple meaning. Paul tells the Church at Corinth, (to whom he is writing,) that the Christians rejoice because they have walked among men in simplicity and sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom.

By fleshly wisdom I suppose he means such cunning instincts as cats and wolves and tigers have; wisdom to lay secret plans and plots to accomplish some selfish purpose.

Men are very shrewd in devising schemes by which to get the better of their fellows; but after all they only copy the feathered and four-footed tribes. The hunter makes a little raft, covering it over with green boughs, in which he hides himself, and floats down the river upon it, into the midst of a flock of wild ducks. Is he not very like your cat, who creeps stealthily through the tall grass, till she gets near enough to spring upon an unsuspecting robin? The

cat has as much of this instinctive or fleshly wisdom in her way, and is no more cruel than the man.

When you children have grown older, and mingled more with the world, you will find there are not only hunters of birds and beasts, but hunters of men,—people who seek by secret arts and tricks to entrap their fellows. Indeed there are some people who find it hard work to speak or act the plain and open truth, even when there is nothing to lose by it.

After pussy has caught and killed a mouse, she often drops it upon the ground, and going away a few steps, creeps round and round it, making believe that it is still alive, and that she is once more having the pleasure of catching it.

So there are people who love to make believe that they are carrying out some deeply-laid plot, and hunting some secret game, even when they have nothing to gain by secret methods.

It is such people as these, among others, I suppose, whom Paul had in mind when he spoke of those who trusted in "fleshly wisdom." He rejoiced that the Christians were not like them. They had never any creeping or hiding to do. All the world could see where they went, and what they intended. They had no occasion to utter a lie, either in word or act, but walked always in simplicity and sincerity.

So then all those long words mean just this; that the true Christian does nothing which he is afraid or ashamed to have others know about.

He is glad and content, because instead of doing or having done anything which he fears others may find out about him, he means only good, and need never hide that meaning away from the world's knowledge. This is sincerity; to speak and act nothing but the truth.

There are times when it may not be well to speak *all* that we know or believe to be true, but there is never any time when it is well to speak what we know to be untrue.

There are people who never make any secret of their thoughts, however much pain they may give to others, and that they call sincerity. By such people it is often said that politeness forces people to be insincere.

That is a very bad idea to get into children's minds, for they are sure to try to be polite, and they ought not to be made to feel that good manners involve untruthfulness.

If your playmate has an unlovely face, you are insincere if you try to flatter him by telling him that he is handsome. Politeness only requires that you should say nothing about it.

If some one by accident steps on your foot, you try to suppress all expressions of pain, because you know it makes another feel badly to think that he has seriously hurt you. But this keeping back something that is in your own mind, out of consideration for

the feelings of others, is very different from telling falsehoods for the purpose of deceiving. We must not think that in true politeness there is insincerity, nor must we allow ill-bred people, who give offense by needlessly showing their dislikes for others, to claim for themselves the virtue of sincerity.

I suppose all the world knows well enough that it is wrong to tell falsehoods. A great many people, however, seem to think that something is to be gained by deceit; and what I want to teach you here is that in the end people never gain, but always lose, through insincerity.

It is not only wrong but foolish to tell falsehoods; and to impress this truth upon your memory, I propose to relate to you a fable.

You know there are many fables about the fox, and I dare say you have read not a few of them. They all relate how Master Fox, by his secrecy, his cunning, and his power to deceive others, gets a very good living without labor, and without injury to himself.

As for instance, there is the fable of the Fox and the Crow. Sir Knight of the Bushy Tail, spies a crow sitting in a tree, holding in her beak a very nice bit of cheese. At once the fox begins to flatter her. Though he knows that she cannot sing, he praises her angelic voice, and begs of her to give him a song.

At last, forgetting the cheese, she opens her mouth

to caw, when down falls the morsel, which the fox was after, and he runs off with it in high glee. The inference is that a smooth tongue which can tell shrewd falsehoods, is able to satisfy all its owner's wants.

A smooth tongue undoubtedly does a good deal of mischief sometimes, but still there are not so many fools like the crow, in the world, as flatterers and deceivers are apt to think, and they do not always have so easy a time as they look for.

There is another side of the history of Master Fox, which I propose to show you; hoping thereby to make you see that a falsehood, whether acted or spoken, is always the longest and hardest, and not the shortest and surest way to gain one's object; and that those who begin by deceiving others, are sure to end by injuring themselves.

At a certain time, not very long ago, and in a certain wood not far from a large farm, lived the fox who is to be the hero of this story. He was like all the rest of his tribe about whom the fables tell. He had the same long sharp nose, bright eyes and bushy tail; the same power and love of deceiving others, and the same taste for a good fat goose, that have distinguished all his ancestors.

One bright morning this fox came out of his hole with his tail very smartly brushed, and set out for a day's stroll. He was bent both upon business and

pleasure. He hoped to have a little fun out of somebody, and also to discover a roost which might be comfortably robbed after nightfall.

As he walked quietly along, every bird took wing at the first hint of his approach; nor with all his art could he get one of them into conversation. They perched upon the very highest branches of the trees; stopped all their chattering, and eyed him with fear and distrust till he had passed on out of sight. For whether it be fox or man, nobody likes to have anything to say to one who is known to be false and treacherous.

The disdain of the birds made the fox feel rather mean and cross; and he went on muttering about the stupid things who couldn't say a civil word to a gentleman. Presently he came to the edge of the wood which bordered upon a sheep-pasture, and there, not far away, discovered a flock of sheep, quietly grazing.

There was no reason why he should not have walked boldly out of the wood and across the field, through the very midst of them. They were not afraid of him, nor he of them. But the fox had a habit of skulking, and disliked an open field. So he began picking his way through the thicket of briars which lined the fences, hoping to escape observation.

It chanced that one of the old ewes was led toward the fence to look after a frisky young lamb which

gave her much trouble, and hearing a rustling in the thicket, she looked up just in time to catch a faint glimpse of the fox, creeping through a thin spot in the bushes. Her eyesight was none of the best, while her fears were great; and instantly the idea took possession of her that she had seen a wolf. So she at once set up a pitiful bleating, and with all the speed she could muster, ran back toward the flock.

This of course alarmed the rest, and in much less time than I take to tell it, the air was filled with a chorus of *baas*, and fifty little woolly tails were bobbing up and down, as their owners went scurrying across the smooth turf.

The farmer, who was at work in the next field, heard the commotion, and came running with his dog. A search was made for the cause of the fright, and before the fox could get back into the wood, the dog had found his trail, and was after him at full speed.

Now a fox does not like to lead a dog straight to his burrow, but runs in circles; and, on the top of stone walls, will make all manner of sharp turns and twists, in the hope of throwing his pursuer off the scent.

But in this instance it was all in vain. The dog gained so fast, and pressed so close upon him, that he was forced to look for shelter. The dog was at his very heels, when he spied a woodchuck's hole at a little distance, which he had just time to

gain. Down he plunged, but the opening was rather small, and in squeezing through, he left his bushy tail for a moment exposed. This the dog seized, and pulled one way; the fox dug his toes into the ground and pulled the other. But a tail was not made for a rope. It broke in two under the strain, leaving the fox to pull in his wounded stump, and the dog to paw and bark impatiently outside.

While he is trying to dig out his rascal prey, let us pause long enough to remark that the fox got himself into this sad scrape by his habit of skulking secretly behind fences and through bushes. If he had openly shown himself to the sheep, they would not have been alarmed; the farmer would have kept on at his work, and the dog would have continued his nap.

It is among people, just as it is among animals. They are afraid of a hypocrite, an insincere person, any one who seems to want to hide himself, or to have some secret way. Though he may not mean them any more harm than the fox did to the sheep, he excites their fears, and soon finds the hounds of hate and suspicion upon his track.

But to return to the fox. As he descended into the hole, it broadened into a little room, and at the farther end sat the owner, very angry at this intrusion.

"A nice mess you have got me into," said the woodchuck to the fox. "Here my fine house will be

ruined by that great dog, and it is more than likely that he will dig us both out and eat us up. At any rate, we shall be shut up here till we are nearly starved."

"Calm yourself, my good sir," said the fox. "I give you my word of honor that you shall not suffer on my account. I will myself defend you. The dog shall reach you only over my dead body; and having my bones to pick, he will be satisfied."

This is what he said. But he thought, "If worst comes to worst, I can make a meal out of you; though I shouldn't wonder if your teeth would be troublesome."

Well, all day the dog snuffed and dug above them, but there were so many roots in the way that he made little progress. Towards evening the farmer came, and after staying a little while he and his dog went away together. No sooner were they out of hearing than the fox attempted to crawl forth. But at the entrance of the cave he found a large trap, over which he could not pass without springing it.

"Lucky," said he to himself, "that I did not kill the woodchuck, for I must make him go out first; he will spring the trap and drag it out of my way."

Returning to the woodchuck he put on his blandest smile and said: "Now my dear friend, you shall go out and get your supper. The danger is over, and

you will be entirely safe; as for me, I think I will first take a nap."

But the woodchuck was a gruff old fellow, and he replied: "As for you, I think you should take yourself off and leave me to sleep. I have no appetite, and do not propose to go out for the present."

"In truth," replied the fox, "I should like to go, but you see this wound in my tail! It pains me dreadfully, and I fear," said he, as he sunk down upon his back, "I fear I shall die unless I get relief."

"Humph!" said the woodchuck, "rather a sudden attack, I should think."

But the fox continued groaning and rolling his eyes, as if in mortal agony. So that at last his companion began to pity him, and was moved to ask if he could do anything for his relief.

"I know of but one thing," replied the fox. "If I had some leaves of the gentian, that I think would cure me. But you needn't go for them," gasped he, "I am now so nearly dead that I shouldn't live till you return." So saying he stiffened himself out with an awful groan and seemed indeed to be passing away.

The woodchuck no longer hesitated, but sprang to the entrance of his cave. Being much smaller than the fox, he could leap where the other could only crawl, and as good luck would have it, he cleared the trap at a bound before he could check his speed.

The sight of the trap, however, made him suspect some plot, and as he turned about, there was the fox poking his nose out after him to see if the way was clear.

"Oh! Sir Knave," said the woodchuck, "you are better, I see; your trick has failed to work. I have the honor to wish you good night and speedy deliverance." So saying he turned about and trotted away.

It was a long while before the fox escaped. Day after day came the farmer, until at last he concluded that the burrow must be empty, and took his trap away. Then the prisoner came forth, poor and dejected, starved almost to the shadow of his former self, and with his stump of a tail hugged close between his legs he sneaked off to find something to eat.

Before going far he met a raccoon, a creature almost as full of falsehood and deceit as himself, but with this merit, that he is always ready to help his friends in distress.

"Can you give me anything to eat?" were the first words with which the fox saluted him.

"Certainly," said the raccoon, "you do look hungry, but come with me and you shall have a feast."

The raccoon's home was in a hollow tree, and his larder was always well supplied. Since the fox could not climb, he brought down to him a plentiful supply

of young chickens, till the fox had eaten all he wanted. Then with many promises to return the favor if ever he found opportunity, Master Fox took his departure.

But at once he began to cast about in his mind for some scheme, by which to get the raccoon out of the way and secure his store of food. So absorbed was he in this matter, that he rambled on without taking any notice of things about him, and suddenly, on turning the corner of a fence, found himself face to face with the dog. Taken so unawares, he trembled in every joint, like a thief before a constable.

"Do not be alarmed," said the dog, "I am not after you, this time. But can you tell me where in this neighborhood lives a Raccoon? I should very much like to put my teeth into him."

"Certainly," replied the overjoyed fox. "But he lives in a tree, where you can not reach him. However, if you will meet me at this place to-morrow at sundown, I will conduct you thither, and engage to entice the raccoon out of his castle."

The bargain was concluded, and the fox ran quickly back. It chanced, however, that a magpie overheard the conversation, and flying before, told it all to the raccoon before the fox arrived.

Great was the raccoon's indignation, but he resolved to see if he could not outwit his false friend at his own game.

"My dear friend," began the fox, upon his return, "little did I think I could so soon return your kindness. But I have just met a brother fox, who is attached to the court of the Lion King, and he offers me a very fine situation in the King's employ. I told him I would much rather you should have the place, and spoke of your cleverness in such warm terms that he has consented to take you, and will call for you to-morrow at nightfall."

"How very good of you," said the raccoon, with well-affected gratitude. "I shall be rejoiced to go; and as I shall not want my store of provisions, I will turn them over to you, provided you will bring a rope with which I can draw you up to them. You can easily jump down again, after they are exhausted."

The fox was filled with glee at the success of his scheme. A little after the appointed hour, just as it grew too dark to distinguish clearly, he was on the spot with the dog and the rope.

"Methinks your friend is rather large for a fox," said the raccoon, as he peeped from his hole.

"He is very large," said the fox. "That is owing to the good living they have at Court. But he is impatient to begin his journey; are you ready?"

"As soon as I have drawn you up," was the reply. So saying, raccoon came down the tree to take the end of the rope, which the fox reached up to him.

"Now then," said he, after he had wound the rope round a limb, "put your body into the noose."

No sooner said than done. The raccoon drew him up till his feet were all off the ground, and then tied the rope fast and left him hanging.

"What does this mean?" said the fox.

"It means," replied the raccoon, "that I know your game. "Sir bailiff Dog, you will not get me this time, and you might as well make a meal of the fox."

This, however, the dog disdained to do, and marched away. The raccoon turned in and went to sleep, and before morning, the fox was strangled to death.

That, my dear children, is the other side of the history of Reynard the Fox, which is not often told in the fables.

It is by far the truer side of the history of all who undertake to lead insincere and crafty lives, rather than be honest and straightforward. It is true of each one of us in some degree, if ever we allow ourselves to lay plans as this fox did, for the deception of others.

You can not tell so smooth a lie that God will not detect it; and sooner or later, every falsehood is sure to be discovered. People will love you only when they find you earnest and sincere, and know they can depend upon your word as the truth. Let them once find out that one whom they know, child or grown-up person, has played the hypocrite and

deceived them, instantly they begin to be afraid of that person. It is impossible for him to prosper or be happy long, anywhere, because nobody will trust him.

Be sure of this, that the truth is always the safest and surest way to reach what you want; or, if you want any thing that can only be gained by some knavish trick, it is best that you should not have it. For instance, if you wish to go to some place, and think your parents will not let you go unless you tell them a falsehood, it is better for your happiness that you should stay at home, than to run the risk of losing their confidence by telling an untruth.

Be sincere in all your words and deeds; then you will never have cause to hang your head for shame. You will never get caught, like the Fox, in your own trap, if you never set a trap for some one else.

Be sincere; then men will respect you. God in heaven will love you, and will think you worthy to be counted a disciple of Jesus.

XVI.

EVERLASTING LIFE.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever.— *Isaiah*, ii. 8.

THE autumn is sometimes called a sad season, because all the beautiful summer then goes away from us; and then a great many sermons preached about it, even sadder than the autumn itself. I might, if I chose, take some such text as, We all do fade as a leaf, or, All flesh is grass, and as the flower of the field so it perisheth; and perhaps I should succeed in making you quite sorrowful. But I do not desire to make you sad, only a little bit sober and reflective.

You see the difference! You are sad when you meet with some loss, as when a pet animal dies, or a pretty toy gets broken. You are sober and reflective, when you look up into the clear heavens at the brilliant stars, and think how very, very far away they must be, and wonder whether there are children up there thinking and feeling as you do down here. I want to make you feel something as you do then, to show you where you stand, and lead you to think a little about what is before you.

One habit of childhood, as I know from remembrances of my own childhood, is to postpone reflection. Though, for that matter, it is too often the habit of older people as well. Yet I am only speaking to the children here, and I know as I say because I have been a child, that they are apt to put aside any question that troubles them, thinking "there is time enough for that by and by." Now every one who loves children will certainly wish that they may not grow old before their time. You cannot be more of a joy to your parents and friends, than by living out your bright, happy and cheerful childish natures. And yet, I know it well, you all have sober moments. Do you not sometimes think what a strange world this is, and of what wonderful things it is full? And do you not try to guess how it all came to be, and what it is all coming to? Well, at these times, when God puts such questions into your minds, he means that you should think about them for yourselves as best you are able. No matter if you cannot make it all plain and satisfactory, it is only by beginning to think that you will ever see light in these great problems. God gives you many times very clear perceptions of what is good and true and right, and if you will oftener think of these subjects when they come into your minds, I am sure God will help you now, as well as after you are older, to arrive at the truth.

So then that is what I want to do now, to make

you a little more thoughtful. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever. The Prophet, you see, contrasts something that is old and dying with something that never grows old and never dies; and in that contrast is the whole force of his saying. Perhaps you do not feel how much there is in such a contrast as you will when the years begin to write furrows in your face, and sprinkle your hair with grey. I know that for you the season does not grow old. When the frosts of autumn come, your eyes are only pleased with the beautiful colors, not pained because underneath this gorgeous mantle, the skeleton fingers of the trees begin to peep out. It is to you of little moment that the summer dies, because the winter has in store an unceasing round of sports. But to father and mother this season brings the thought that their lives are passing away, just as leaves wither and fade. Their autumn is coming on, when they will be forced to part from you and all the things of this beautiful earth.

Most of you have read enough history to be familiar with the story of the old Spanish adventurers who came to this country when it was new, and spent so much time and wasted so many lives, in searching for the Fountain of Youth. It was very foolish of them, no doubt, to imagine that there were any waters, by bathing in which, they could keep themselves always young. But that they should want to

find such a fountain was natural enough, for it was just this same want that everybody feels, for something they can keep forever.

You have all seen, doubtless, the picture of a cross, set firmly into a rock, and lifted just above the reach of a boiling tide of waters. To the cross are clinging shipwrecked people, and others with arms vainly outstretched toward this refuge, are being driven past to some horrible dark fate below. It is not altogether a pleasant picture to look at, but it illustrates what I just now want you to see, the value of something that stands — that is, which is not swept away by this great tide of change. Not only the leaves, but trees and animals and men, are all brought at length, into the dust together. Even the great rocks of the mountains slowly decay and fall into the valleys. We all want to find something that will stand without ever crumbling to pieces. We lay hold of objects and keep them for a time, but one after another, they are taken away from us, and we stretch out our arms toward something that neither the frosts of autumn nor the storms of winter, neither decay, nor disease nor death itself, can move. As autumn is the time when the grass withers and the flowers fade, it brings to our remembrance how our bodies and all things earthly, will in the same way wither and fade, and the great lesson of that season of the year is to turn our thoughts toward what will still endure, when the autumn and winter

of our lives come upon us. We want to know then, what will thus endure? What does the prophet mean, when he says, The word of our God shall stand forever? Well, then, since it is said, you remember, that there are sermons in sticks and stones, — let us see if the history and experience of one of these same leaves, now whirled about by our December winds, will not help us to find out its meaning.

Away back in the spring-time, (for does not that seem ages ago? so much has happened since) — away back in the early spring-time, on the topmost twig of the very highest bough of a tall and stately apple-tree, a little bud, which for months had been in a sort of shivering sleep from the cold, began in a dreamy sort of way to hear the robins chirp, and to feel, deep down in its heart, that the sun's rays were getting uncomfortably warm beneath its thick coverlet. So first the sleep of the little bud began to be uneasy and broken. It stretched itself out, within its snug nest, and pushed its little green head into the open air, and then in an instant it was broad awake, filled with wonder and surprise. From its high perch, it could look over all the neighboring trees, away beyond the town, to the great hazy hills in the distance. There was nothing above it but the deep blue sky, across which were lazily sailing white masses of stately clouds.

And so the little bud looked up and blinked at the

full splendor of the morning sun. Then the music of a bird close by its side attracted its attention, and when the bird had flown, it fell to watching the sports of some children underneath. Then it speculated much about the nature and purpose of the carriages dashing past on the highway, and laughed till it burst its coat, watching the funny antics of the lambs in the next field.

Altogether, its first glance at the world filled it with delight, and as it thought What a beautiful, happy time I shall have day after day, with nothing to do but enjoy the sunshine, and watch what goes on about me for ever, it grew a whole eighth of an inch with the thrill of pleasure. So the bud soon became a tiny leaf, and grew to know that portion of the world which it could see, quite minutely. It went through its first storm very bravely and soon forgot it, in the new brightness that succeeded.

But meantime another little bud had been opening on the same twig; and one morning, the leaf, which was not yet fairly out of its shell, became aware of the presence of a white blossom, delicately tinged with pink. The first hint from its neighbor, was a breath of perfume, which the blossom sent across by a passing breeze. The leaf nodded its acknowledgments, and thus the way was opened for an acquaintance, which before noon ripened into intimacy.

The leaf had much to relate of what it had seen,

being a little older than the blossom, and the latter in turn was moved to unfold all its hopes for the future. But soon the leaf began to contrast its form and color with those of its beautiful friend, and finding the comparison result to its own disadvantage, a little bit of envy sprung up in its tender heart. Then it observed that the children now bestowed upon the blossom all their admiring glances; that the humming-birds and the bees paid it frequent visits, quite to the neglect of the leaf; so it began to be jealous, and as is usual, its envy and jealousy found vent in abuse.

It confided to a robin, that in its opinion the blossom was afflicted with the most brazen impudence; that it should henceforth decline ever to speak one single word to it, and that he, (the robin), need only just wait until after the first shower, to see that pretty pink all faded, if indeed the whole flower were not washed away.

This was purposely said in a loud tone, so that the blossom might overhear; but it was very busy, trying to make a small apple, so it simply shook out another little laugh of perfume, and went on with its work. However, the prediction of the leaf came true, for the very first rain thoroughly drenched the poor blossom and scattered it far and wide.

Then the leaf was triumphant, and although it had only spoken a malicious wish, without any real knowledge of what was coming to pass, yet it prided itself greatly on the superior wisdom it had displayed.

The same storm blew out from under a clump of bushes, a bunch of withered leaves, which, as they went rustling and skurrying across the field, attracted the leaf's notice. It was the first time it had looked upon anything dead, and it did not know what to think.

So when the robin came back to see about the blossom, he was asked for information on the subject. Then he had to tell the poor little leaf, that one of those dry, twisted things had very likely grown upon that very same twig, the summer before, and that by and by would come storms and frosts, when it too would grow old and die, and be swept away by chilling winds.

This troubled the leaf not a little, for a time, but presently it said, Well, I will have a good time while I can, anyhow; and so dismissed the whole matter. Then it fell to thinking again about the blossom, and being in a reflective mood, and glancing toward the place which the blossom had lately occupied, found that the blossom had left behind it a funny-looking, little, green ball. As this did not seem to be nearly so pretty as itself, the leaf was quite ready to lay aside all spite, and enter into friendly relations.

So the apple and the leaf grew together, through all the summer loveliness. Together they suffered from the dust, and enjoyed the pattering showers. Together they laughed when the wind swung them

to and fro, and together they watched the busy life about them during the sultry calms.

As autumn came on, the apple grew gradually ruddy and smooth and full, but so slowly, that the leaf's envy was not aroused, or perhaps it had gained too much wisdom to make its envy known.

The season went on, until the farmers had well-nigh finished harvesting, when one morning the leaf awoke to find itself covered with a pure white coat, from which stood out multitudes of little sharp needle-points, reflecting the sun in a most dazzling way. To be sure it felt a certain unwonted numbness, but still you may believe it was mightily pleased with this new splendor. Very short-lived it was, however, for the sun had hardly looked at it, when a few little drops of water trickled away, a little puff of steam went up, and the beauty of the frost had vanished.

Then it was that the leaf perceived the injury that had been done to it. The frost was not severe, and so had not killed it outright, but its edges began to curl a little, and then grow stiff and hard. So the leaf turned to the apple for sympathy, but behold! its place was vacant, and there was nothing but a little black stump to mark where the stem had parted. Away down below, half hidden amidst the grasses, its ruddy face shone back to its former companion, and there was a great ugly bruise upon one side, where it had struck a bough in its descent. Soon a

man came under the tree and picked it up, but finding the bruise, threw it down again. At first the leaf was saddened by the loss of its friend, but directly it began to feel triumphant, as it had over the blossom.

Well, it thought, the frost couldn't cut *me* off so easily. My stem is sound, and I shall hold out so long that it isn't worth while thinking about the end. So it plucked up heart, forgot the apple, and went on enjoying itself as heretofore. But the nights grew colder, the days shorter, and the winds sharper. Gradually a yellow tinge spread over the surface of the leaf, and even crept down the stem. Still the leaf would not allow itself to think that it must die, but persistently put the idea aside and pursued the little round of pleasure left to it.

The air was full of its falling fellows, but it only laughed to see them dodge and twist about to avoid tumbling to the ground. There was still one little green spot left in its centre, and it thought itself safe, as long as it could retain that. But even in the midst of its glee at the misery of others, a fierce blast swept by, and tore it from its fastening. Then indeed it was full of alarm. This way and that it madly flew, to catch something to stop its fall. But down at last it came, right beside the apple.

"Well," said the leaf, "so here we are together once more, and almost dead."

"Speak for yourself," replied the apple, "for as for me, I shall never die." "But," said the leaf again, "You are decaying already, and judging from appearances, I should say you were nearer gone than I am." "Very true," replied the apple, "but down in my heart I feel a little germ of life, already budding anew. All along I have hoped and dreamed that it might be so, even from the time the blossom left me a little ugly unripe ball; and now I know that I contain a seed of life which will live on, though my body die, and will see the new spring-time, will bud and blossom and bring forth fruit of its own."

Then said the leaf, "Oh! that I had been a blossom." Just then a rake came by, dragging and mangling the poor fallen leaves. So that this leaf was very thankful for a gust of wind which hurried it away, and lodged it high up in the corner of a fence. From thence it watched the gardener with terror, as he raked together load after load and carted them into the hungry flames, until finally, its turn came. There was a crackle and glow, a little fierce sputtering struggle, as the heat reached all the life left to it, then a pile of white ashes soon scattered by the wind, and that was the end of the leaf forever.

But the apple sent a little sprout into the earth, and when the soft southern breezes came again, where it had lain, people found a little tender shoot of green. So they nurtured it and tended it until it

grew to be a giant tree, and the birds came and built their nests in it. The children for many summers played in its shade, and ate of its fruit, and its help and blessing extended to many of God's creatures.

Now see you what stood where the leaf had faded? and why the leaf dried? It was not that it had done anything very wrong, but because it neglected to do anything very right. It lived altogether in the present moment, and took no thought for a life beyond. Its joys were joys which soon passed away, but it was content with them, and took no pains to provide pleasures which could endure. The blossom too had a beauty in itself, and enjoyed the moments as they went by, just as keenly, but it also found time to grow into an apple, and as an apple to mature its seeds, and as a seed it found opportunity to become a tree.

The life that was in the blossom, stood, that is, remained through all changes; the life that was in the leaf, grew old and perished with the summer.

You children, have your sports and games, as you ought to have, in which you take keen delight, but will you try to remember that these are the leaves of your lives, and must soon fade? As you grow older, many things in which you now have pleasure will be laid aside. I would not have you hasten to give them up, but you should already have a care to find enjoyment in things which do not pass away.

The word of God is in your hearts, even that word which, as the Prophet declares, shall stand forever. It tells you to do the right, prompts you to generous and unselfish deeds, and fills you with a great bounding joy, when you have done something good and kind. And will you try also to remember that these are the blossoms of your lives? The beauty and joy of any one such act may soon die out of your remembrance, even as the blossoms perish on the tree, but it will leave its fruit behind, and that fruit will sink deep into your souls, and will come up again like a tree of life, to fill your own and other lives with gladness, even though every other source of joy were dead to you.

Thus through all the storms of sorrow; through all the changes between you and manhood and womanhood; through all the trials to be met before you reach the gate of heaven; through the last great change of death, and on into the boundless life beyond. However the grass may wither and the flowers fade, the word of God, once planted in your hearts, will stand forever.

THE END.

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